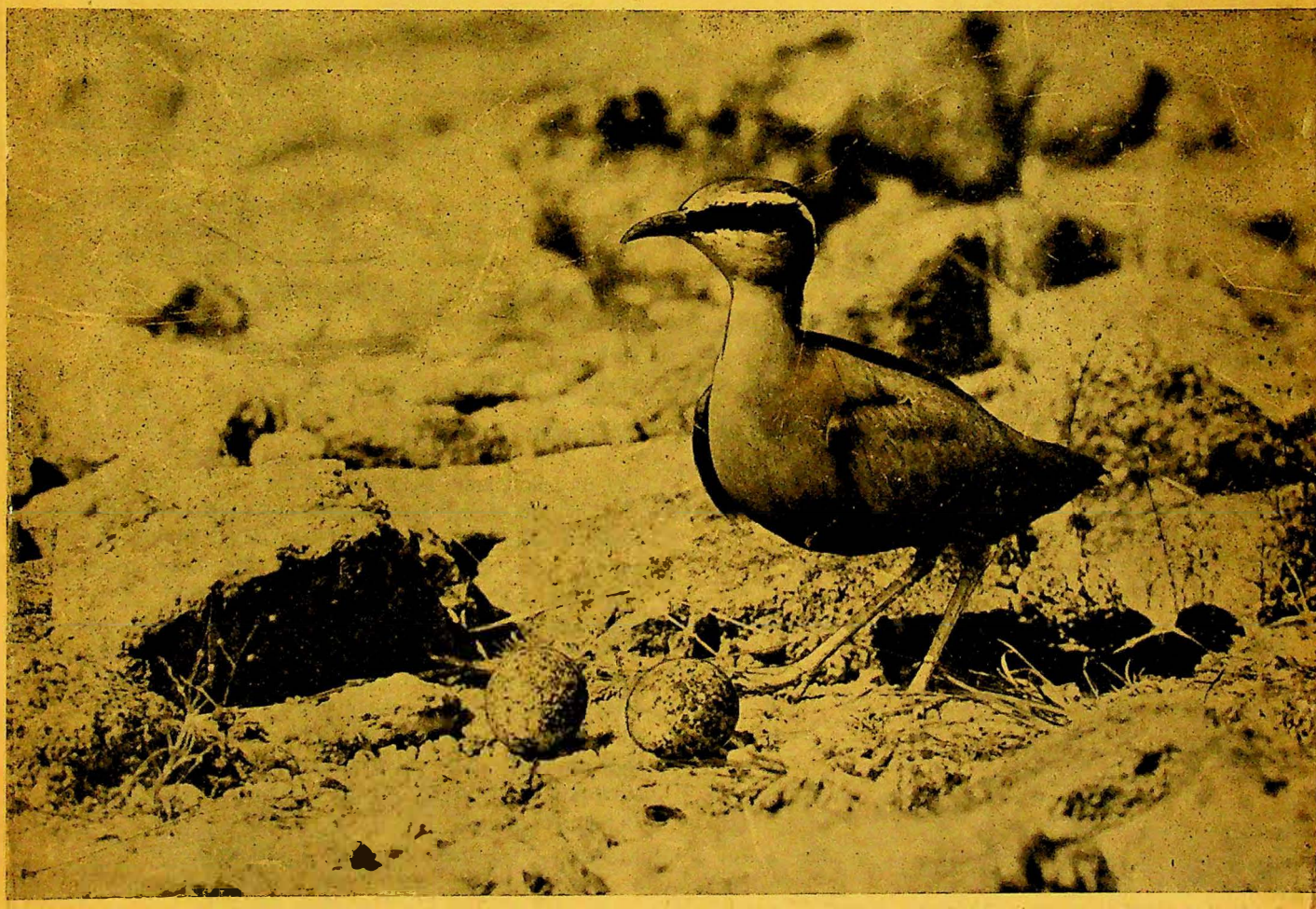
MAYURA

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRD-WATCHERS' SOCIETY OF A.P.

AASHEESH PITTIE.
14-7-370, BEGUM BAZAR
HYDERABAD-500 012.

Vol. 5: No. 1

January — March 1984



HELP CONSERVE WILDLIFE

ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH 30th VANYA PRANI SAPTAH

BIRD SANCTUARIES OF ANDHRA PRADESH

KOLLERU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located in West Godavari District.
Area :	673 Sq. Kms. (Depending on the water spread)
Habitat :	It is a marsh with shallow water spread.
Birds Found :	Large number of Garganey Teals, Common Teals, Pochards, Spotbills, Brahminy Ducks, Openbill Storks Herons, occasionally Flamingoes. Grey Pelicans which used to visit this area have become rarer due to various causes.
Season :	October to March.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary can be approached by road from Eluru, the District Headquarters (on N. H. 7) which is just 10 Kms. away. In the Sanctuary area small dinghies or dugouts can be used for approaching birds.
Airport :	Vijayawada — 70 Kms.
Accomodation :	P. W. D. Rest House in Eluru, the District Headquarters.

PULICAT SANCTUARY

Location :	60 Kms. north of Madras City on N. H. 5
Area :	500 Sq. Kms.
Habitat :	A vast coastal shallow brackish lake along the east coast of the Bay of Bengal. The backwaters of the sea attracts a large number of migratory water birds.
Birds Found :	Large congregation of Flamingoes, Grey, Pelicans, Ducks, Teals, Storks, Terns, Herons, Gulls and a number of waders.
Accessibility :	The Bird Sanctuary can be approached by road from Nellore on the G. T. road (NH. 5). The nearest railway station is Sulurpet. Madras City is about 60 Kms. from the Sanctuary to the south by road & rail.
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 60 Kms., Tirupati — 90 Kms.
Accomodation :	Travellers Bungalow at Sulurpet.

NELAPATTU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located on the East Coast, about 20 Kms. north of Pulicat Bird Sanctuary in Nellore District.
Habitat :	A small fresh water irrigation tank in the village of Nelapattu, with Barringtonia trees in the water spread on which the water birds nest.
Birds Found :	Grey Pelicans are found nesting on the Barringtonia trees in the tank bed. Other nesting birds include Cormorants, White Ibis, Night Heron, Openbill Storks etc. The villagers offer full protection to these birds.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary is approachable from the Madras-Vijayawada Highway (NH. 5). Also by rail from Doravarichatram railway station on the Nellore—Madras line. (1 Km.)
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 100 Kms., Tirupati — 120 Kms.

For further details contact : Divisional Forest Officer (WLM) at the respective District Headquarters

OR

The Chief Wildlife Warden
Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
Saifabad, HYDERABAD-500 004

INDIAYURA

AASHEESH PITTIE.
14-7-370. BEGUM BAZAR
HYDERABAD-500 012.

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRDSWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

VOL: 5 JANUARY - MARCH 1984 Indexed NO: 3 1

IN THIS ISSUE:- PAGE NO.

* Survey of the Birds of Andhra Pradesh-12-by Pushp Kumar 2
* Observations on nesting of Grey Pelicans (Pelecanus philippensis) and Painted Storks (Mycteria leucocephala) at Telineelapuram, A.P. -by T.V.R. Shastry 4
* Recording of first and last sightings of annual migrants in & around Hyderabad with notes on general distribution - by Aasheesh Pittie - 3 - 8
* State Bird of Andhra Pradesh - some alternatives by S. Ashok Kumar 10
* Pathfinders to Pakhal Pastures - by N. Shiva Kumar 13
* The Nesting of Birds & Flowering of Trees by Aasheesh Pittie & N. Shiva Kumar 16
* Behaviour of Birds - by Siraj A. Taher 17
* Birdwatching in Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary - by B.C. Choudhury 23

* Miscellaneous Notes:-

I. Birdwatching at Sangareddy - by Rajeev Mathew 25
II. Extraordinary behaviour of Pond Herons - by Rajeev Mathew 25
III. An unusual flock of Hoopoes - by B.C. Choudhury 25
IV. Some observations at the nest of an Indian Tree Pie - by Aasheesh Pittie 26
V. Whitethroated Munias pecking salt - by Aasheesh Pittie 28

* ~~Society~~ News. 28
* Comment - Deepak Chowdhury 29

Editorial Board:
B.C. Choudhury
Aasheesh Pittie
N. Shiva Kumar
Taqiuddin Ansari

Indexed
Birds
Places
AP Biblio
26.9.91

SURVEY OF BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH-12

By:- Pushp Kumar,

PHEASANTS, PARTRIDGES AND QUAILS: (Phasianidae)

This large group has some of the most gorgeous birds like the Peafowl (other beautiful pheasants are not found in Andhra Pradesh), and birds most useful to man like the Jungle Fowl (progenitor of the domestic poultry) Spurfowl, Partridges and Quails noted as delicacies and favourites of trappers (like the Pardies and Yerukulas). Of the 46 species reported from Indian subcontinent belonging to this family, (7) species and (9) forms are reported from Andhra Pradesh.

PARTRIDGES:-

Two species and 3 forms occur in Andhra Pradesh in dry scrub or grasslands and on the edges of fallow fields etc. Much sought after as a good delicacy and for trade.

PAINTED PARTRIDGE: Francolinus pictus pictus (Jardine & Selby)

Telugu: Rangula Kamsu
Urdu : Teetar Kakera

Resident in appropriate facies throughout the State. Number flush out along the road in Vanasthali grassland near Hyderabad. Seen in Nelapattu Sanctuary in Nellore District in the dry evergreen scrub forest.

NORTH INDIAN GREY PARTRIDGE: Francolinus pondicerianus interpositus (Hartert)

Telugu: Budadarangu Kamsu, Teetuva
Urdu : Teetar

Resident. Numbers augmented during winter. Occurs in the State mainly in grasslands and scrub forests. Groups seen in Kidekhbad patnam Zoo, Adilabad, to outskirts of Hyderabad. Found in fair numbers in the scrub forests around Hyderabad from where they were captured by pardies and sold in Hyderabad not so long ago. Capture mainly by the use of a decoy bird. Nets are also used for capturing these birds.

SOUTH INDIAN GREY PARTRIDGE: Francolinus pondicerianus pondicerianus (Gmelin)

Telugu: Budadarangu Kamsu, Teetuva
Urdu : Teetar

Resident. Scrub and grassland country south of above. Difficult to differentiate in the field from above. Seen in the small groups in Nelapattu Sanctuary, Rollapadu and elsewhere in the region.

QUAILS:

(6) species of Quails are reported from Andhra Pradesh. Found in scrub or grassland country in stony or bouldery facies or amidst margin of fallow fields picking on grains or grass seeds etc. One species is found in hilly country.

GREY QUAIL: Coturnix coturnix coturnix (Linnaeus)

Telugu: Gogira Yellise, Budadarangu Yellise
Urdu : Bater

During winter throughout the State. The Quail (alongwith the next species) that is commonly used as a delicacy in hotels in Hyderabad. It is mainly trapped by the use of nets.

BLACK BREASTED OR RAIN QUAIL: Coturnix coromandelica (Gmelin)

Telugu: Nallabora Yellise
Urdu : Bater

Resident. Found through the State in grassy fields and scrub lands. Often heard more (the call is distinctive) than seen, especially during the rains)

JUNGLE BUSH QUAIL: Perdicula asiatica asiatica (Latham)

Telugu: Girija pitta, Adavipoda Yellise
Urdu : Lowwa

Resident. Throughout the State except the extreme south-east (see below). Perhaps this species is much more common than the other Quails of similar size. Found in scrub country and grasslands. Also in low deciduous forests.

TAMILNADU JUNGLE BUSH QUAIL: Perdicula asiatica vellorei (Abdulali & Reuben)

Telugu: Adavipoda Yellise
Urdu : Lowwa

Resident. The range given for this sub-species in the Handbook is "North Arcot District, Tamilnadu probably extending to Shimoga (Karnataka) and Palkonda Hills (North-eastern Andhra Pradesh)". If this is so then the range becomes disjointed being separated by roughly six hundred kilometres., between Srikakulam District and Chittoor and Cuddapah Districts in Andhra Pradesh. Perhaps the range should read "South-eastern Andhra Pradesh". The confusion being probably due to hill ranges in two different districts being known by the same name.

DECCAN ROCK BUSH QUAIL: Perdicula argoondah argoondah

Telugu: Lowunka, Ratipoda Yellise
Urdu : Lowwa

Resident. Throughout the State. However differentiation in the field from the above mentioned species not easy. Found in scrub and grass country in drier and more rocky areas. The Handbook also mentions another sub-species Mysore Rock Bush Quail occurring adjacent to Andhra Pradesh in "Mysore". Its occurrance in Andhra Pradesh though likely, is not recorded.

PAINTED BUSH QUAIL: Perdicula erythrorhyncha

Telugu: Lowwa
Urdu : Sirsee Lowwa

Resident. Reported from Eastern Ghats in Visakhapatnam agency areas around Chintapalli, Gudem etc., from where (6) specimens obtained

and released in the Easternghats Aviary in Vizag Zoo. Humayun Abdulali has mentioned this species in his list of birds of Vizagapatnam, but it is not listed as occurring in Andhra Pradesh in the Handbook. This will thus extend the range of this species to Andhra Pradesh definitely.

BLUEBREASTED QUAIL: Coturnix chinensis chinensis

Telugu: Nila Elliche
Urdu : Bater

Resident? Reported by Salim Ali from Mulug on the shores of Ramappa lake in Warangal District during his survey of 1931-32, whence a pair was also collected. Thereafter no definite reports of the same within our limits.

- -

OBSERVATIONS ON NESTING OF GREY PELICANS (Pelecanus philippensis) AND PAINTED STORKS (Mycteria leucocephala) AT TELENEELAPURAM ANDHRA PRADESH

By:- T.V.P.Sastry, Officer, State Bank of India, Tekkali-532 312

Teleneelapuram - a small village with a population of about 500 is situated 4 km from Tekkali (by road) and one and half kilometer from the nearest railway station Naupada in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. In a tamarind (Tamarindus indica) grove of this village, a large flock of Spotted-billed or Grey Pelicans (Pelecanus philippensis) and Painted Storks (Mycteria leucocephala) nest every year. During their four to five month stay, the villagers protect the birds jealously. The state Forest Department has also posted a watcher to assist the villagers in protecting these birds.

From the third to the last week of September the Pelicans and Storks start arriving. After a brief period of settling down they start collecting twigs and branches and get busy in constructing nests. Till the end of February or beginning of March, the nesting, incubating and rearing of the fledglings continues unmindful of the presence of the villagers.

Located as it is on the coast, the Naupada backwaters, Kakkarapalli Para (lake), Dali and Rudrabanda lake - all within a radius of 3 to 5 km of Teleneelapuram provide the food requirement of these birds.

During two daytime observations carried out by the author on 30 October and 27 November 1983 the following activities of the birds were made.

30 October 1983:

Nesting activity is in full swing. Both Painted Storks and Grey Pelicans are busy collecting nesting material from the nearby trees. Out of the 14 trees on which they are nesting, two are small in size, and the rest about 15 to 20 feet in height. Seven of these trees have a higher concentration of birds. The lower branches are occupied by Painted Storks and the top branches by the Pelicans.

The nest building urge of the low flying Painted Storks is so great that my presence just 8 to 10 feet away does not deter them from collecting and placing twigs and branches with leaves in their nests arranging them neatly using their pointed long beaks.

From their posture in some nests, it seems as if eggs have already been laid and some even hatched. Low visibility at the late hours of 30 October makes it impossible for me to make any further observation.

27 November 1983:

I start my observation early and with the time available make a rough sketch of the position of trees in the area on which the birds have chosen to nest. Of the fourteen (14) trees, twelve are Tamarind and one Baditha and one Moligi*(See Figure).

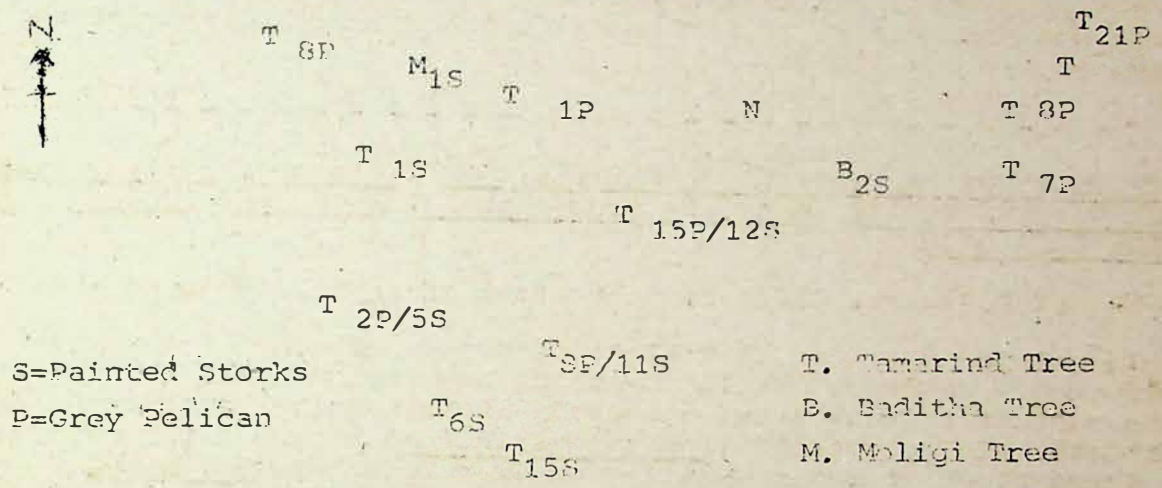


Figure I. Position of trees at Teleneslapuram on which Grey Pelicans and Painted Storks nest. A number followed by P or S denotes the number of nests in each tree. Eg: T 15P/12S means there are 15 Pelican nest and 12 Painted Stork nests on a Tamarind (T) Tree. Similarly M 1S means one Painted Stork nest on a Moligi Tree.

+ Baditha and Moligi are local (Telugu) names for the trees. The author could not identify the trees.

Some Storks are still getting nesting material, either to add new bedding to existing nest or for repairing slightly damaged nests in which two week old chicks are present.

During the four hour observation period three chicks fell from the nest - two died instantly and one was injured in left leg and body. (the tender attachment of the leg to the body torn). Parent birds just look on helpsessly from the lower branches of the nearest tree. It appears as though in the course of feeding by the parent birds, the chicks are pushed (or come on their own) to the rim of the nest and fall. The forest watcher informs so far nine chicks have died falling from the nest (including the three of today)

The Pelicans are still incubating. Their nests are so close that spreading their wings they can touch each other. There are occasional clashes with clattering sound of their beaks - particularly when a bird lands on a nearby nest.

The forest watcher informs falling of 70 to 80 eggs (of both Pelicans and Stork) from the nest. Most of these eggs are preserved by the watcher for verification by forest officials.

The noise of young chicks being fed by their parents is maximum between 1200 to 1430 hrs. From his peak feeding hour gradually the noise decrease and by 1[illegible] hrs. it is almost nil. Pelicans now restart to nest repairing and Storks spread their wings to protect the chicks from sunlight.

A visual count of nest accounted for a total of 123 nests (both of Pelican and Stork). (See Table I). From this I try to estimate the number of eggs produced, mortality of eggs and casuality of chicks during rearing. Counting of nests also gives me a rough estimate of the number of adult birds, at the beginning of the season. From all this I have made an estimate of the total population that may have left Peleneelapuram at the end of the season in February-March 1984. (Please see table II).

Table I: Number of nests in different trees and their status.

Tree Species	No.of Pelican nests	No.of Stork nests	Remarks
Tamarind	21	-	All in hatching stage
Tamarind	-	-	-
Tamarind	8	-	do
Tamarind	7	-	do
Baditha (local name)	-	2	tree height only 10 to 12 feet.
Tamarind	15	12+	+ Two empty nests
Tamarind	8	11	Pelicans are hatching
Tamarind	-	6	Two week old chicks
Tamarind	-	15	do
Tamarind	2	5	Pelicans are hatching
Tamarind	-	1	Two week old chicks
Tamarind	1	-	Hatching
Maligi (local name)	-	1	Two week old chicks
Tamarind	8	-	Pelicans hatching
Total nests	70	53	

Table II: An estimate of Population of Pelicans and Storks both at the beginning and end of the season

	Grey Pelicans	Painted Storks
Number of nests	70	53
Less (Margin for counting error)	5	3
Net No. of nest	65	50
Number of birds (adults) at the start (2 per nest)	130	100
Number of eggs (4 per nest)	260	200
Egg loss (estimate)	40	30
Chick casuality (estimate)	60	40
Chick survival	160	130
Plus parent birds	130	100
Total at the end of the season	290	260

General notes and suggestions:

The author requested the forest watcher to keep a record of egg/chick falls from the nest (separately for Pelican and Stork) date-wise for future verification.

Perhaps some method can be adopted to prevent chicks falling from the nest to hit the ground by spreading some kind of soft cushioning material (straw) on the ground or a low level net spread at least one feet high from the ground below the trees with nests. Chicks thus saved may be hand reared for greater survival chances.

With some additional financial incentive and training on rearing of chicks a forest guard/watcher may help during the season (November to March). The present watcher has no information as to what he should do if he salvages a fallen chick which has a fair chance of survival given a bit of loving care. Perhaps some interested member of the BSAP may volunteer to help in this regard.

An ancient sport in some villages in northern Pakistan is threatening the endangered Siberian Crane Grus leucogeranus. Migrating cranes, caught by throwing weighted cords into the air, are killed for food and sold for pets. Common Cranes G.grus and Demoiselle Cranes Anthropoides virgo are also caught as they migrate between their breeding grounds in USSR and Afghanistan and their wintering grounds in India. Dr. Landfried, an American crane expert who has visited the villages involved, hopes to encourage the Pakistan government to devise and enforce conservation regulations to protect the Siberian Crane.

ORYX - Vol.17, Oct 83

RECORDING OF FIRST AND LAST SIGHTINGS OF ANNUAL MIGRANTS IN AND AROUND HYDERABAD, WITH NOTES ON GENERAL DISTRIBUTION - 3

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370, Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-12

Continued from page 8 of Vol. 4 No.4;

V Laridae:-

1. BROWNHEADED GULL Larus brunnicephalus Jerdon.

Breeds in Ladhak and on the inland lakes on the high plateaus of Central Asia. In Winter, spreads down south, range extending all along the coasts of southern Asia. Occassionally on inland lakes (possibly on passage to coasts). Reported in India between August/ September to March/April. Since this note covers 3 winters from 1980-1983, the "first date" in these years was 6 February. Subsequent data reveal more realistic date of 27.11.1983 from Himayat Sagar.

First date:	6 February	Place:	Manjira Barrage.
Last date:	27 March	Place:	Himayat Sagar

2. BLACKHEADED GULL Larus ridibundus ridibundus Linnaeus

A central Palaearctic breeder, it winters on the coasts of southern Asia. Mostly on the western seaboard of the sub-continent, it winters during some period as above. Rarer of the 2 around Hyderabad.

First date:	25 October	Place:	Hussain Sagar
Last date:	6 February	Place:	Manjira Barrage

VI. Meropidae:-

1. BLUETAILED BEE-EATER Merops philippinus philippinus Linnaeus

Breeds in the Oriental Realm, wintering south of it in Philippines and Indonesia. Status not very clear in India. Breeds in northern India and patchily in central India. Around Hyderabad seen only in winter - and therefore taken in this list (strictly it would be called a local migrant).

First date:	31 October	Place:	Patancheruvu
Last date:	27 March	Place:	Himayat Sagar

VII. Alaudidae:-

1. RUFOUS SHORT-TOED LARK Calandrella cinerea dukhunensis (Sykes)

Breeds in the northern Oriental Region, wintering in India between September and April. Commoner than other sub-species, longipennis, in central, eastern and southern India.

First date:	5 December	Place:	Shamirpet
Last date:	13 February	Place:	Shamirpet

VIII. Hirundinidae:-

1. COMMON SWALLOW Hirundo rustica ssp ?

Two races concern us. The first rustica breeds throughout the Holarctic and also from Baluchistan to western Nepal along the extreme northern boundary of India. The second gutturalis breeds from Nepal (where it intergrades with the former) to Japan. Both winter extensively over SE Asia. In India they arrive in vast

congregations around September and spread throughout the country, returning by end April. Identification of race, in flight is difficult.

First date: 9 November Place: Shamshabad
Last date: 5 May Place: Himayat Sagar

IX. Laniidae:-

1. BROWN SHRIKE Lanius cristatus cristatus Linnaeus

Breeds across the Palaearctic Region and winters in SE Asia. In India it is found roughly south and east of a line from Surat to Nepal. Arrives August/September and mostly gone by end April.

First date: 3 October Place: Indira Park
Last date: 28 March Place: Osman Sagar.

X. Dicruridae:-

1. INDIAN GREY DRONGO Dicrurus leucophaeus longicaudatus Hay

Breeds in the extreme northern regions of the Indian sub-continent, from western Pakistan to Bhutan. Winters south of these regions between September/October and March/April.

First date: 31 October Place: Patancheruru
Last date: 30 January Place: Patancheruvu

XI. Sturnidae:-

1. ROSY PASTOR Sturnus roseus (Linnaeus)

Breeds in SE Europe and SW Asia, wintering south of those regions. In the sub-continent from W Pakistan to Bengal, straggling into Assam. South through the Peninsula, decreasing in extreme south India. Sparingly in Sri Lanka. One of the earliest migrants to India, arriving by early July in the NW. Depart by early May. Abundant around Hyderabad in winter.

First date: 6 February Place: Manjira Barrage
Last date: 26 March Place: Hyderabad City

XII. Muscicapidae: Muscicapinae:-

1. REDBREASTED FLYCATCHER Muscicapa parva ssp ?

Breeds in the central Palaearctic regions, wintering in Africa, India and Indo-China. Two races concern us, but separation of Winter-plumage birds in the field is fairly difficult. Arrives in India by end August, mostly leaving by end April.

First date: 16 August Place: Nehru Zoological Park
Last date: 29 March Place: Nehru Zoological Park

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:- I thank Capt. N.S. Tyabji for his valuable suggestions and advice and constant encouragement.

REFERENCES:-

Ali, S & Ripley, S D (1978) - Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, Compact Edition.

Henry, G M - A Guide to the Birds of Ceylon.

Ripley, S D (1982) - A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan, 2nd edition.

STATE BIRD OF ANDHRA PRADESH - SOME ALTERNATIVES.

By:- S Ashok Kumar, I.A.S., 10-3-283/5, Humayun Nagar, Hyderabad - 500028.

Andhra Pradesh has 64,189 sq. kms. of reserved forest and the percentage distribution of forest land to the total geographical area, as per 1980-1981 statistics, is 22.64, and it continues to be the same even now. These forests were once teeming with wildlife but with deforestation and consequential loss of habitat, the wildlife has been declining gradually. Hunting has also claimed its toll. The cumulative effect, over a period of years, is the total extinction of some species like the Jerdon's Courser (Cursorius bitorquatus) and pushing some species like the Great Indian Bustard (Choriotis nigriceps) etc., to the brink of extinction.

Our forests abound with a wide range of birds, big and small, dull coloured and brightly coloured. There are no specific guidelines or accepted principles as to whether the selection of a state bird should be made from (a) extinct species, (b) vanishing species or (c) existing species. Again, there are no fixed criteria for the specific selection. However, broadly speaking, the following perhaps, could be the parameters for making the choice.

1. Commonness
2. Widely known
3. Striking colours
4. Abundance
5. Peculiar distribution
6. Endemic or exclusiveness
7. Peculiar or special to a region

It may appear odd to look for tee State Bird from out of the species which are extinct. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to examine the claim of the Jerdon's Courser (Cursorius bitorquatus). This longlegged, sleek, ploter-like bird with conspecuous white bands across the chest was confined to the scrub jungle in the eastern ghats of our state. It was discovered for the first time by the noted taxonomist Jerdon in 1848 near Nellore. It was known in Godavari and Penner Valleys, Rayalaseema and Bhadrachalam. The last authentic record of the bird was in 1900 and it is listed in the Red Data Book of the IUCN. As it was found only in our state and nowhere else, it can be said that this bird is endemic and exclusive to our state and it has put our state on the ornithological map of India. Being truly 'Andhra', it is a serious contender but the total extinction of the bird is a point against it for, protection and preservation of this species is not possible.

Next we have to scan the list of vanishing species which are on the verge of extinction. The Great Indian Bustard (Choriotis nigriceps) immediately strikes our mind. About a century ago, the GIB was a common bird found in the plains of the Indian sub/continent. During the last decade, however, its numbers were reduced to 1260. It is declared endangered in the Red Data Book of the IUCN. This magnificent bird has been located in Medak, Kurnool, Mahaboobnagar, Anantapur and Hyderabad districts and necessary steps have been taken to protect and preserve their dwindling numbers. It has already been declared as the state bird of Rajasthan and hence it cannot claim the same honour in our state.

Out of the existing species of birds in our state, the selection of a state bird is rather ticklish. The range of birds which are common, known and numerous is rather wide - sparrows, crows, pigeons, doves, mynahs, bulbuls, bayas, munias, treepies, drongos, orioles, tailor-birds, wagtails, kingfishers, egrets, water-fowl, raptors, etc. These are found in almost all the other states. Mere commonness or numerical strength does not alone qualify for the status of a state bird. There is a galaxy of colourful birds in our state like the purple moorhen, green bee-eater, emerald dove, purplerumped sunbird, golden oriole, jerdon's chloropsis, goldrronted chloropsis, paradise flycatcher etc., which, however, do not conform to most, if not all the parameters.

The Little Spiderhunter (Arachnothera longirostris) and the European Tree Sparrow fall under the category of "peculiar distributuon" as they are found in the Himalayan and the Eastern Ghats only. But very little is known about them in our state.

By a process of elimination, the choice narrows down to the following claimants; 1) Blue Jay, 2) Grey Pelican, 3) Indian Pitta, 4) Brahminy Kite, 5) Common Kingfisher, 6) Goldenbacked Woodpecker and 7) Crimsonbreasted Barbet.

Being a bird of open country, Blue Jay or the Indian Roller (Coracias benghalensis) is one of the best known birds in our state. It is widely spread throughout the country and a familiar sight in cities, towns and villages. One never loses the thrill, especially when the bird is in flight, revealing the banded glory of its wings and tail. Perching on a telegraph post or an elevated and commanding point, it dives to the ground to capture insects like termites, grasshoppers and beetles, small lizards, mice and flies back to its perch for a meal. Since it destroys many injurious insects it is considered as the best friend of the farmer. Because of its commonness, familiarity, striking colours and being highly beneficial to the agriculturists, many advocate that it should be given the State Bird status. It is believed that Lord Shiva had assumed its form and hence it is called the 'Nilkant'.

The Grey Pelican (Pelecanus philippensis), squat and ponderous with its enormous beak and an elastic pouch is a familiar sight to many. Living exclusively on fish, it is found on all inland waters. In our state it was located in Kolleru Lake near Kolamur (W Godavari District) and Hamsaladeevi (Krishna District) and locally known as "Kolleti konga". The bird has since deserted the lake because of the gradual destruction of its habitat and the local people robbing the bird of its eggs. It is found in small numbers in Teli Neelapuram in Srikakulam district. A fairly vast breeding colony is found near Nelapattu in Nellore District. The Grey Pelican is also found in Point Calimere Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu. Though it is a known bird, it is neither endemic nor exclusive to our state.

The Indian Pitta (Pitta brachyura), a stoutly built bird with a short stumpy tail is mostly terrestrial and found throughout the length and breadth of the country. Its bright plumage is variegated with blue, green, black, white, fulvous and crimson

This beautiful bird feeds on grubs, beetles, ants and other insects and has thus become the friend of the farmer. Indian Pitta is a common and widely known bird for its gorgeous colours. It cannot be said that it is endemic to Andhra Pradesh but it is peculiar and special to our state since it bears the telugu name "Pitta". The world "pitta" is the latinisation of a telugu word meaning 'small bird'. In view of this signific/ance, this bird is a serious contender to the title of State Bird.

The Brahminy Kite (Haliastur indus) is a bird of wide distribution throughout our country. A bright chestnut bird of prey with black wing tips and a white head and breast, it is a familiar sight in cities, towns and villages. It feeds largely on refuse, carrion, crbbs, frogs, grasshoppers, chicken, small fish and snakes. It is revered by Hindus as Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. It is called Brahminy Kite because of its association with Vishnu. Although common and widely known, it is not a colourful bird and it is neither peculiar nor special to our state.

A beautiful blue-black and orange-red breast make the Common Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis) one of the world's most colourful birds. It is a common and known bird, principally feeding on small fish, tadpoles, larvae and other aquatic insects. It is found widely through the country. However, it has no special significance for our state.

The Goldenbacked Woodpecker (Dinopium benghalense) is one of the best known birds and easily recognised by its loud call and black and white plumage with vivid crimson crest and brilliant golden back. This bird, climbing up the tree trunks or hopping from one tree to another, is a common sight in villages and towns. It is distributed throughout the country. It also qualifies for the status of State Bird since it is common well known and brightly coloured.

The Crimsonbreasted Barbet or Coppersmith (Megalaima haemacephala) is another attractive bird with brilliant colouration More easily recognised by its hammering call than its form, it is found practically in the entire country. This bird is also one of the claimants to the status of State Bird on the ground of commonness, wide distribution and bright plumage.

Having examined the various claims, one feels that the balance of advantage is in favour of the Indian Pitta for, it conforms to most of the parameters like commonness, widely known, striking colours, abundance and peculiar and special to our region. It is because of this bird that the telugu word 'pitta' was latinised and has gone into worldwide circulation in the scientific field. It would therefore be appropriate to honour the Indian Pitta by conferring on it the status of State Bird.

PATHFINDERS TO PAKHAL PASTURES

By:- N. Shiva Kumar

We started off, walking into the dawning sun, along the rim of the large lake which showed no indication of being there when we arrived at midnight, last night. Loaded with cameras, binoculars, screwed-up rotis and other paraphernalia in our backpacks, we took in lungfuls of cold, fresh air and flexed our muscles as we trod along. The lush panorama before us was certainly eye-pleasing, something different from the stale, sticky and stampeding city of Hyderabad, from where we had originally started to reach the Wilderness at Pakhal. Pakhal, one of the oldest Wildlife Sanctuaries in Andhra Pradesh is about 150km northwest of Hyderabad, set up in 1953, it is spread over 350 sq km of undulating terrain. A forest lodge and a state tourism bunglow provide accomodation for nature lovers.

Sponsored by the Hyderabad Nature Club and the A.P.Forest Department, we (a gang of four) started on an uncertain note, for the weather was wet with rain (the last week of June 1983) and we had no expert with us to explain things in the wilderness. Naturally we were dejected. On reaching Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary, at the stroke of midnight after a belly-full of feed at a roadside inn, we felt better. Once at the twin forest lodge I was very much impressed by the array of insects - there were myriad moths, blackbeetles and lots of bugs hovering and crawling all over the verandah. The source of attraction was a single naked bulb. And hunting them, with whip-like tongues were geckos (house lizards) very fat and treble the size of the ones we see in the city. This was a sure indication of bright days ahead.

On the very first day out in the open jungle we put our bird identification skill to test. Surprisingly we spotted many 'bundles of feathers' with no flaws. This, I am sure, was possible due to the numerous outing we undertook with the BSAP in the environs of urban and suburban Hyderabad and coached by experts. The tally at the end of the day was forty species and a few probables.

On the second day we were anxious for our gang leader, B.C.Choudhury, a reptile expert whose forte is the subject of Indian crocodiles and is an officer at the Nehru Zoological Park-Hyderabad, to join us. He did turn up as promised but a day later. From then on it was smooth sailing - climbing over hills and dales, pursuing birds on the wing, shooting them with long lenses on film, locating nests and in the process getting lost in the jungles, which was all part of the lessons in woodcraft.

We had to, after watching the varied vegetation sprout from every brown patch of earth, appreciate the value of rain. For without it, the forests would not be so green and crawling with caterpillars which in turn triggered the internal mechanism in birds to mate and and produce their young. The juicy food in the form of caterpillars and worms to feed their offspring was ready to be picked. Butterflies were also numerous all over the sanctuary, not in tens and hundreds but thousands, like puffy clouds flying erratically and alighting on damp soil along streams and pools of water to suck the juices of the earth. Birds like the bee-eaters, flycatchers, and others naturally took their pick in mid-air after performing a jig or two to kill the butterfly with their bills.

The final checklist of birds in the sanctuary reads as follows:-

1. Little Cormorant (Phalacrocorex niger)
2. Darter (Anhinga melanogaster)
3. Median Egret (Egretta intermedia)
4. Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea)
5. Pond Heron/Paddy Bird (Ardeola grayii)
6. Openbill Stork (Anastomus oscitans)
7. Comb Duck/Nakta (Sarkidiornis melanotos)
8. Cotton Teal (Nettapus coromandelianus).
9. Common Teal (Anas crecca)
10. Lesser Whistling Teal (Dendrocygna javanica)
11. Crested Serpent-Eagle (Spilornis cheela)
12. Crested Hawk-Eagle (Spizaetus cirrhatus)
13. Pariah Kite (Milvus migrans)
14. Indian Shikra (Accipiter badius)
15. Egyptian Vulture (Neophron percnopterus)
16. White-backed Vulture (Gyps bengalensis)
17. Grey Jungle Fowl (Gallus sonneratii)
18. Peafowl (Pavo cristatus)
19. Rain Quail (Coturnix coromandelica)
20. Redwattled Lapwing (Vanellus indicus)
21. Little Ringed Plover (Charadrius dubius)
22. Ring Dove (Streptopelia decaocto)
23. Spotted Dove (Streptopelia chinensis)
24. Green Pigeon (Treron phoenicoptera)
25. Rose-ringed Parakeet (Psittacula krameri)
26. Large Indian Parakeet/Alexandrine Parakeet (Psittacula eupatria)
27. Coucal/Crow-Pheasant (Centropus sinensis)
28. Brainfever Bird/Hawk-Cuckoo (Cuculus varius)
29. Pied Crested Cuckoo (Clamator jacobinus)
30. Brown Fish Owl (Ketupa zeylonensis)
31. Common Indian Nightjar (Caprimulgus asiaticus)
32. Alpine Swift (Apus melba)
33. House Swift (Apus affinis)
34. Common Kingfisher (Alcedo athis).
35. Pied Kingfisher (Ceryle rudis)
36. White-breasted Kingfisher (Halcyon smyrnensis)
37. Blue-tailed Bee-eater (Merops leschenaulti)
38. Little-green Bee-eater (Merops orientalis)
39. Indian Roller (Coracias benghalensis)
40. Hoopoe (Upupa epops)
41. Grey Hornbill (Tockus birostris)
42. Coppersmith Barbet (Megalaima haemacephala)
43. Green Barbet (Megalaima zeylanica)
44. Mahratta Woodpecker (Dendrocopos mahrattensis) Picoides
45. Golden-backed Woodpecker (Dinopium benghalense)
46. Pigmy Woodpecker (Picoides nanus)
47. Ashy-crowned Finch-lark (Eremopterix grisea)
48. Small Indian Sky-lark (Alauda gulgula)
49. Red-rumped Swallow (Hirundo daurica)
50. Bay-backed Shrike (Lanius vittatus)
51. Blackheaded Oriole (Oriolus xanthornus)
52. Golden Oriole (Oriolus oriolus)
53. White-bellied Drongo (Dicrurus caerulescens)
54. Large Racket-tailed Drongo (Dicrurs paradiseus)
55. Black Drongo (Dicrurus adsimilis)

56. Brahminy Myna (Sturnus pagodarum)
57. Jungle Crow (Corvus macrorhynchos)
58. Indian Tree-pie (Dendrocitta vagabunda)
59. Blackheaded Cuckoo-shrike (Coracina melanoptera)
60. Sirkir Cuckoo (Taccocua leschenaultii)
61. Little Minivet (Pericrocotus cinnamomeus)
62. Common Iora (Aegithina tiphia)
63. Redvented Bulbul (Pycnonetus cafer)
64. White-browed Bulbul (Pycnonotus luteolus)
65. Jerdon's Leafbird (Chloropsis cochinchinensis)
66. Gold-fronted Leafbird (Chloropsis aurifrons)
67. Jungle Babbler (Turdoides striatus)
68. Whiteheaded Babbler (Turdoides affinis)
69. Blacknaped Blue Flycatcher (Hypothymis azurea)
70. Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (Muscicapa tickelliae)
71. Ashy wren Warbler (Prinia socialis)
72. Magpie Robin (Copsychus saularis)
73. Grey Tit (Parus major)
74. Large Pied Wagtail (Motacilla maderaspatenisis)
75. Tickell's Flowerpecker (Dicaeum crythrorhynches)
76. Purplerumped Sunbird (Nectarinia asiatica)
77. White-eye (Zosterops palpebrosa)
78. Wryneck (Jynx torquilla)

Though the Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary was fairly disturbed by large herds of grazing cattle and occassional logging, the vegetation at places was 'Jungle thick', otherwise there were quite a few man made 'bald spots'. Inspite of the disturbance many of the above listed birds were at nest.

A similar team of Hyderabad Nature Club (B.C. and I include) visited the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary last year. It is also in the same district of Warangal and once said to be a continuous belt of forest. A checklist of birds of the sanctuary was published in 'april-june, 1983' issue of MAYURA.

Barn owl Tyto alba numbers have been falling dramatically everywhere in Britain in the past 20 years. The reasons: intensive farming, the destruction of old barns, pesticides and, now, according to a survey being carried out by the Hawk Trust, motorways. Barn owls, attracted to motorway verges by high populations of voles, are being killed by collision with vehicles. Colin Shawyer, who is carrying out the survey, found five dead owls on one mile of motorway in just one night.

ORYX - Vol.17, Oct 83

The Middle Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopus medius has disappeared from Sweden where it was once widespread in the south; its decline is associated with the clearance of oak forest on which it depended. By 1980 only two pairs bred and since then severe winters have probably contributed to its disappearance.

ORYX - Vol.17, Oct 83

THE NESTING OF BIRDS AND FLOWERING OF TREES:

By:- Aasheesh Pittie & N. Shiva Kumar

NESTING BIRDS:

1. SCAVENGER VULTURE (Neophron percnopterus)

February 1984 — Mr P. Balu reports: one nest in horizontal crevice between 2 boulders in Mehdipatnam (Hyd city). Birds seen incubating. Nest destroyed by miscreants later.

Outcome: Failure

2. COPPERSMITH (Megalaima haemacephala)

6/3/1984 — Mr. S. Taher reports: one nest-hole in dead tree in Banjara Hills (Hyd city).

3rd week of March — Adults feeding nestlings

4th week of March — Fledglings flying around garden, being fed by parents.

Outcome: Successful

3. COMMON IORA (Aegithina tiphia)

26/2/1984 — Nehru Zoological Park (Hyd. city). One nest being built on Babool (Acacia arabica), 15' above ground level. Subsequently it was destroyed.

Outcome: Failure

4. LARGE PIED WAGTAIL (Motacilla maderaspatensis)

a) 9/2/1984 — Hyderabad city. One nest inside hollow of rotting palm leg on roof of a residence. Both parents feed young (No. ?) and one spends night inside hollow. Outcome: Unknown

b) 19/2/1984 — Nehru Zoological Park, Hyd. city. One fledgling on ground being fed by parents.

5. PURPLERUMPED SUNBIRD (Nectarinia zeylonica)

a) 29/1/1984 — Mahavir Harina Vanasthali (Hyderabad district). A pair building nest in tree, c. 8' up. Outcome: Unknown

b) 26/2/1984 — Nehru Zoological Park, Hyd. city. One nest being built in tree, c. 15' above water. Outcome: Unknown

6) PURPLE SUNBIRD (Nectarinia asiatic)

a) 14/1/1984 — Nehru Zoological Park, Hyd. city. One nest being built in a young Palmyra, c. 4' above ground, at edge of pool. Outcome: Unknown

b) 26/2/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, Hyd city. One nest being constructed on Bauhinia (Bauhinia purpurea), c. 11' up.

Outcome: Unknown

7. STREAKED WEAVER BIRD (Ploceus manyar)

26/2/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, Hyd city. Nesting activity commenced within reeds. One male in breeding plumage seen constructing nest

Outcome: Unknown

8. WHITETHROATED MUNIA (Lonchura malabarica)

8/1/1984 Chilkoor (Hyd.dist.), birds seen collecting nesting material.

FLOWERING TREES:

1) Candlestick Flowers (Cassia alata):- As the name suggests the flowers stand on an erect stalk and buds open at the base first and continue to do so in the ascending order. The flowers remain fresh for 2-3 days and the stalk itself remains for about a month issuing flowers of buttery yellow colour. Usually they bloom in the months of November and December but were observed flowering well into the month of January. Sofar I have noticed just two of these shrubs in the city, one at the second entrance gate of the Public Gardens and the other at the begining of the 'Naya Pul' bridge.

2) Pomegranate (Punica granatum):- A hardy and much branched short tree was in flower in March. The flowers have crinkled petals in orange red colour with fleshy calyx; a few trees had white coloured petals. The flowers burst open revealing their hairy red throats that contain numerous stamens. Both birds (Redvented Bulbuls) and the squirrels love the juicy seeds of the fruits which crack open when ripe.

3) Guava (Psidium gunjava):- A sturdy medium-sized tree with smooth bark, bears flowers that are whitish with a profusion of stamens in the middle, that gives the flower an ornamental look. Flowers noticed in March. Fruits are fleshy and much favoured by birds and squirrels.

BEHAVIOUR OF BIRDS-I

By:- Siraj A. Taher, Road No.1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

The behaviour of a bird is what it does, how it takes care of it's young and how it reacts to other birds & animals & to the environment in which it lives. One of the basic rule of the study of bird behaviour is that in order to understand it properly, one must observe it under natural conditions in the environment where it has evolved. It is rarely possible to describe a behaviour pattern after a single observation. It is necessary to know the complete

that behaviour which can be performed by the bird. Only after a prolonged observation will they begin to fall into an ordered picture which will reveal something of the causation of the behaviour, it's function & relationship to other behaviour patterns in the bird's repertoire. However, experience can increase the ease with which the subtle changes in behaviour can be recognised. The really eminent & reputed ornithologists are the ones who have been the most patient observers, so patient in fact that passersby, seeing him from dawn to dusk in the same spot & observing birds or just staring into the wilderness (to them, it seemed so) considered him to be a person who has lost his mind.

When studying or observing a new behaviour or a series of behaviours, a number of questions arise; viz: (1) Causes of the behaviour, (2) Function or significance of the behaviour, (3) Evolution of the behaviour & (4) Development of the behaviour in the individual.

(1) Causes of the behaviour: Why does a bird act the way it does? What are the factors which are responsible for the act? When we want to look for the causes of a behaviour, the primary concern should be the internal state of the bird as well as the external stimuli leading to the act which is the BEHAVIOURIAL RESPONSE. For an example, take the nest-building activity of the Purplerumped Sunbird (Nectarinia zeylonica), which is partly the result of the secretion of the female hormone, the courtship activity of the male Purplerumped Sunbird being partly responsible for this hormonal change.

(2) Functions & Significance of the behaviour:- Some of the basic questions that arise during the study of behaviour are; What is the use of the behaviour & how is the bird benefited by it? How is a particular behaviour helping the survival of the species? There are some actions which could be very important both to the bird & to the species. Blackheaded Gulls (Larus ridibundus), which nest colonially, always carry away the empty eggshells as soon as the chicks hatch. Why? Investigations showed that crows, which are among the chief predators of eggs & chicks, very quickly spotted the empty shells & consequently found the nest & nestlings also. This simple behaviour of the gull in removing the empty shells & reducing predation of young gulls (it's own as well as the others in the colony) and eggs becomes very important for the survival of the species. A similar behaviour of the Golden Oriole (Oriolus oriolus) in either swallowing or removing the faecal sacs of the young one's & not leaving any trace either in the nest or on the ground partly contributes to the raising of a successful brood.

(3) Evolution of the behaviour:The origin of a particular behaviour & it's evolution can best be understood by a comparative study of a similar behaviour in a closely related species. In the study of waterfowls, it has been surmised that various movements involved in say drinking, preening, feeding & flight take-off, which are likely to occur more often in situations like courtship, have been subject to selection & become RITUALISED. In such cases, they have lost their original function & their physiological mechanisms have evidently become tied to the new behaviour process. The preening movements of the various species of ducks in the breeding season when the Garganey (Anas querquedula) drake would run its beak through it's brightly coloured wings, the Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos

by a similar action exposes a bright blue feather in it's wing. Usually associated with some conspicuous body features these behaviours are aspects that make clear & unambiguous SIGNALLING, whether in courtship or in agressive display. In ritualisation the intensity of movements tend to be increased & standardised and are repeated rhythmically & differ a little in timing & speed from the behaviour patterns from which they are derived.

(4) Development of the behaviour: Have you ever watched an Indian Robin (Saxicoloides fulicata) scratch it's head? If you have, then you would have noticed that it passes it's leg over a drooped wing to reach it's head and scratch indirectly. The House Crow (Corvus splendens) on the other hand will always scratch it's head directly by passing it's leg in front of it's wing.

How did a particular behaviour develop in the individual? Is it INSTINCTIVE or LEARNED or a combination of both? Is experience or learning necessary for the bird to perform the behaviour or did it inherit the ability to perform the act perfectly the first time? Birds do inherit some of the stereotyped SPECIES SPECIFIC behaviours like the head scratching action of the Indian Robin and perform them without previous experience or learning. Such behaviours are called INSTINCTIVE or INNATE behaviours, sometimes also known as FIXED ACTION PATTERNS. Each instinctive behaviour has its own set of internal factors, hormonal or otherwise and when these factors called the SPECIFIC POTENTIAL build up to a certain level, the particular instinctive behaviour can take place. The bird is now ready and given an external stimulus will act. As an illustration let us consider a bird in the process of obtaining a meal. A Shikra (Accipiter badius) its specific action potential built up by internal factors, among them hunger, flies at random over his territory with no set pattern. Suddenly a movement is noted on the ground below and it spots a partridge and immediately its actions become more instinctive & stereotyped. He dives, snatches the bird in it's sharp talons & carries it to a perch where it is killed, plucked & finally eaten. With the eating of the prey, or the CONSUMMATORY ACT, that particular sequence or behaviours ends. Once this consummatory act of any sequence of behaviour is performed, the specific readiness to perform that particular behaviour diminishes & disappears. The Shikra having satisfied his hunger & spent his specific action potential, will not hunt again until the internal factors build up to a level high enough to start that particular behaviour once again. However, if the Shikra fails to catch the partridge & does not release the specific action potential, his behaviour in the form of random flying will continue.

It is usually believed that even when the specific action potential is high, there is some mechanism which prevents the occurence of a behaviour without an external stimulus & this internal block keeps the behaviour from taking place until a particular environmental stimulus activates the RELEASING MECHANISM that removes the block. For the hunting Shikra, the sight of the moving partridge was the external stimulus that removed the block to the bird's instinctive behaviour for obtaining a meal. Similarly the Large Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) chick, hungry & with a steady build-up of their specific action potential will peck vigorously on the parent

birds yellow throat patch no sooner it alights on the nest. Stimulated by the pecking & tickling, the parent will regurgitate a mass of food which the youngster will pick up & swallow. From a study ofsuch behaviours we could conclude that when the specific action potential builds up in a young chick, the presence of the parent bird & the sight of the yellow patch triggers the release mechanism which removes the mental block to the pecking behaviour. With the appearance of food, the chick instinctively picks up & eats it & contented, it stops pecking & takes a nap.

LEARNING AND INSTINCT:

Learning & instinct blend in most behaviour patterns of the bird. While most behaviours appear to be wholly instinctive, experience can modify most of them, that is, some learning can & does occur in the life of a bird. Whereas all instinctive behaviours take place with some interaction with the environment, learned behaviour has a genetic orinherited basis which imposes certain definite limits on the ability of a bird to learn. Instinctive & learned behaviours interact. Take the case of the development of the calls in the Hill Myna (Gracula religiosa). Birds raised in complete isolation from other Hill Mynas & who have not heard an adult bird talk or call will develop their own calls though very different from the original calls & talk of their own species. When these isolated birds hear the calls of other birds including those of their own species and also human talk, they will learn a variety of calls including the ability to mimic the human voice, but out of all these calls, talk & mimicry, the call they will learn the best would be that of their own species. This shows that the Hill Myna inherits a part of its call and learns the rest from members of its own species. Eventhough, a bird has the ability to learn other call and sounds, it most readily picks up these of its own species.

LEARNING is an adaptive change in individual behaviour as a result of experience. Despite the belief that birds are merely creatures of instinct, studies have shown that many birds are capable of quite complex learning, eg. parakeets, mynas, pigeons, partridges & cormorants etc. Infact their ability to learn surpasses that of many mammals. Thus to be called a 'bird brain' should no longer be insulting:

TYPES OF LEARNING:

(a) Habituation: This is the waning of a response to repeated stimulation when no reward or punishment follows. Even nestlings learn this way. If you lightly tap on the side of a nest which contains nestlings with their eyes still closed, the chicks will raise their heads & open their mouths wide because for them a movement on the nest means food. If this tapping isrrepeated without giving any food, they will soon stop responding as they have become habituated to the stimulus of tapping. Habituation is a sort of negative learning -- not to respond to a stimulus which carries neither a reward nor punishment.

Some birds react instinctively to certain predators, especially those which are a primary danger to the species. But the number of potential dangers is too great for a bird to have an instinctive response to every bird of prey. Instead it learns what not to be afraid of.

Young chickens at first respond by crouching to all overhead movements, whether a large flying bird or falling leaves. Since leaves fall quite frequently & bring neither a reward nor punishment, the bird soon becomes habituated to it and ceases to crouch whenever leaves flutter down. Large flying birds are rare, so the chickens never become habituated to the sight of one overhead & continue to respond by crouching every time they see one. In the begining, for any young bird the response to many things is instinctive & generalised, later they learn by habituation what to respond to & what to ignore.

(b) Conditioning: The ability of a bird to learn 'by association' & to respond to a stimulus is conditioning. This learning is a little more complicated than habituation. Vultures 'associate' the distant flying of members of their kind with availability of food in that area eventhough they themselves have not sighted the food source yet. Some other birds of prey show learning by association when they return regularly to successful hunting areas. Similarly other wild birds show it when they come repeatedly to the bird table in your garden. The table alone meant nothing to them till such time when they learnt through conditioning, to associate it with food.

(c) Trial & Error: A type of conditioning, trial & error learning also occurs in wild birds. As an example, take the feeding behaviour of insectivorous birds. A young bird just out of the nest but still dependent on its parent for food, moves about pecking at various small objects--pebbles, leaves or anything that contrasts with the background. Sooner or later it finds an insect, seizes & eats it. Once it finds a reward for it's pecking, it gets more careful & learns to associate food with certain types of objects. What started as an instinct gradually develops into learning by trial & error & it knows what to peck at & what not to peck and also what to eat & what not to eat. An obnoxious insect when picked up is flung aside & avoided thereafter at all time. Birds seem to have good memories for certain unpleasant experiences & sometimes the taste of only one insect they dislike gives them an everlasting aversion to anything even similar in appearances.

(d) Imprinting: To establish or impress something firmly on the mind is known as imprinting. Unlike conditioning it carries no apparent rewards. Possible only during a brief time known as the SENSITIVE PERIOD, usually 10-20 hours after hatching, it is almost impossible to imprint outside this period. Sometimes a duckling or a young chicken needs to look at a man for only a few minutes & it will retain for the rest of it's life a tendency to regard him as a fellow duck or hen. While the young of some species of birds require an auditory stimulus to recognise its parents or others of its kind, for most others, like the duckling, a visual stimulus triggers the imprinting of the young on their mother before they learn to recognise her by her calls.

Behaviourial studies have provided enough evidence to show that imprinting plays an important part in the learning of songs. In the wild, the young Magpie Robin (Copsychus saularis) learns a

part of its song probably from hearing its father. There seems to be a critical period when this learning can take place & after they are about an year old, the young Magpie Robins that have been kept in complete isolation cannot learn any song, either that of its own species or that of any other.

Locality imprinting is important in the selection of habitat also. It is presumed that the young bird, during the first few weeks of its life becomes imprinted on the locality where it hatched. Eventhough in case of migratory species it may leave shortly thereafter & not return till the next season, the locality imprinting remains. The locality imprinting (almost always a visual stimulus) of the birds' wintering habitat also remains firmly established on the bird. This is the reason why the migratory species of birds continue to fly to & fro between two places & almost always nest or winter in the same locality..... but more about these migratory patterns & behaviours some other time.

- -

EXTRACTS:

My first experience of the Rosy Pastor (Pastor roseus) as a crop ravisher was in the Nander District, where flocks of countless multitudes were observed descending in 'clouds' upon fields of ripening Jowari, supremely indifferent to the frantic protests of the ryots. To form an idea of the damage these birds must cause, I shot four birds at random out of a flock. Their stomachs & crops were packed tightly with Jowari grains exclusively which aggregately weighed one tola (about 11 gms.), which means that 160 birds would account for 4 lbs. Considering the size of a flock--commonly 3-4 hundred birds or more--and the number of such flocks, and taking into account the extremely rapid digestion of birds & the fact that their depredations continue intermittently from daybreak till dusk, I would think it to be a conservative estimate to say that a flock of 400 Pastors would account for 25 lbs. of Jowari in a day. The enormity of this damage can be better appreciated when it is remembered that this means the food of one villager for 10-12 days! To get an adequate idea of the damage they cause, it is necessary to see for oneself the hordes of Pastors as they descend upon the fields. However, against this must be set to the Pastor's account the benefit he confers by devouring locusts on a large scale in times of 'invasions'. In Uzbekistan (Russian Turkestan), from whereabouts many of our winter visitors certainly come, the nestlings have been ascertained to be fed practically exclusively on locusts in their various stages.

---Salim Ali,(1933).--The Hyderabad State Ornithological Survey.- JBNHS,36:365

BIRDWATCHING IN CORINGA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

By:- B.C. Choudhury, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad-500 264

At Dhawaleswaram Godavari river branches into two: the eastern or Gautami Godavari and the western or Vaisitha Godavari. The eastern Gautami Godavari being the widest carries in its flow enough silt. The heavy sand-drift moving up and down the coast near Kakinada tend to form bars across the mouth of Godavari and the silt carried down the river meets the opposing sand-drift and tidal current to get deposited at the mouth forming extensive mudflats. These mud-flats are the locations where extensive mangrove forests have got established. These tidal forests thus formed, 12 Km south of Kakinada town near the Coringa village is known as Coringa Forests. In the year 1888, these forests were constituted as reserve forest and after 90 years of exploitation in 1978 an area of 235 Sq. Km. was declared as a Wildlife Sanctuary to protect the unique mangrove forest and the fauna associated with it.

Plants belonging to the genus Avicennia (Called Mada in Telugu, and being a dominant species in the Coringa area the forests here are locally known as Mada forests), Sonneratia (Kalinga), Rhizophora (Uppu-ponna), Bruguiera (Urdu and Kundilla) and Ceriops (Gedara) are the primary mangrove vegetation in Coringa. All these are vivi-parous plants (fruits germinating in the tree itself) with pneuma-tophore and stiltroots - the special adaptations for a life in the mangrove mudflats.

The January 1984 visit to Coringa was my second to this extensive mangrove in six years. I have fond memories of my movement in the mangrove creeks of Coringa while releasing saltwater crocodiles in March 1978. For the first time I was seeing mangrove mudflats, stiltroots, pneumatophores, floating germinated fruits of mangrove plants, mudskippers, crabs, large shrimps, white mullets-all with special adaptation for a life in the varying salinity and fluctua-ting water level of the muddy creeks of the mangrove mudflats.

I was a novice in identifying birds but Mr. Pushp Kumar had pointed out to me Openbill Storks, Reef Herons, Blackcapped Kingfisher, River Terns and the Brownheaded Seagull. (Larus . . .)

Inspite of my several programmes it was not until January 1984 I could make a second visit to Coringa. This time my job was to col-lect enough mangrove plants to be shifted to Vizag zoo to create an artificial mangrove in the new saltwater crocodile breeding pool (the habitat of the saltwater crocodile, Crocodylus porosus, is the mangrove creeks.). In my three days stay at Coringa I was able navigate Coringa river and many of its small creeks, the sea coast on the northern boundary of the sanctuary and the bordering transitional zones of the mangrove and manmade vegetation (crops). Since my visit was in the winter months I was looking for some-thing R.B. Cromwell (1937) wrote in the " Working Plan for the lower Godavari Division - 1934 to 1944.

Cromwell wrote:

Pelicanus . . Numenius . . .

" The Indian Pelican and two species of Curlews are found in the mangrove swamps throughout the year. In the cold

weather ducks and teals are plentiful in the mangrove swamps... and there are some good Snipe ground within the adjoining the mangrove forests."

Except for the Snipe and the Curlew I could not see any of the other birds mentioned by Cromwell. Perhaps had I spent a few days more and covered the flat lowlying swamps on the southern border of the sanctuary the ducks and the teals would have obliged me.

However, the list that follows would show how rich is the avifauna of Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary.

1. Little Cormorant Phalacrocorax
2. Little Egret Egretta
3. Median Egret "
4. Indian Reef Heron "
5. Little Green Bittern B.S.
6. Pond Heron A.g.
7. Night Heron Nycticorax
8. Yellow Bittern I.s.
9. Chestnut Bittern I.c.
10. Openbill Stork A.o.
11. Brahminy Kite H.i.
12. Pale Harrier ?? C.
13. Whitebellied Sea-Eagle
14. Whitebreasted Waterhen A.p.
15. Common Snipe G.g.
16. Redwattled Lapwing V.i.
17. Little Ringed Plover C.d.
18. Whiskered Tern C.
19. Blackwinged Stilt H.h.
20. Curlew Numenius
21. Common Sandpiper Tringa
22. Little Stint Calidris minuta
23. Brownheaded gull Larus
24. Blue Rock Pigeon Columba
25. Spotted Dove Streptopelia
26. Roseringed Parakeet Psittacula
27. Crow-Pheasant Centropus
28. Palm Swift Cypsiurus
29. Roller Coracias benghalensis
30. Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis
31. Small Blue Kingfisher Alcedo
32. Whitebreasted Kingfisher Halcyon
33. Blackcapped Kingfisher "
34. Black Drongo Dicrurus adsi
35. Common Myna Acridotheres
36. Pied Myna Sturnus Contra
37. Jungle Crow Corvus macr.
38. Indian Bobin Saxicoloides

I intend to spend several days in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary during next winter ('84-85') to make the list of birds more exhaustive and possibly with some luck may even spot a few Belicans.

Survey of Bald Ibis (Geronticus eremita) in 1983 revealed that fewer than 400 exist - with 364 living in Morocco. The Moroccan Water and Forests Department have proposed a new national park, to protect more than half the world's ibises and their feeding and breeding grounds: the Massa National Park is a strip of land between Agadir and Tiznit, 65 km long and 10-15 km wide, and is a resting and wintering area for a large number of migrating birds.

IUCN Bulletin - 14 (4/5/6)

In 1983, 230 Siberian Cranes Grus leucogeranus were discovered on wetlands north-west of Pyang-hu, an enormous lake whose waters mingle with the Yangtze River in Jiangzi Province in China.

The ICF Bugle, 9:2

Three Crested Ibis Nipponia nippon chicks have been recorded in Shaani Province in northern China, bringing the known world population to 18.

The ORYX Vol.17, Oct 83

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:

Birdwatching at Sangareddy --- By:- Rajeev Mathew

I. I had been to Sangareddy on the 30th of April and again on the 7th of July. Nothing has changed in the intervening months except that the migrants have left and the tank where BSAP members stop, has shrunk.

On 30th April I saw about 30 birds each in two groups. Identification suggested they were Grey Plovers, 4 Whitenecked Storks and a pair of Black Ibis.

At Manjira I saw Painted Storks and White Ibis and also the Crested Serpant Eagle.

On July 7th at the pond I saw a Lesser Spotted Eagle flying low.

From the trees on the road side leading to Manjira I heard a call not unlike that of a Kite's. On going upto the tree I saw the Crested Hawk Eagle, sitting and sporting his plumes. I also saw the Crested Honey Buzzard and the Alexandrine parakeet. In the fields lately ploughed a pair of Lapwings where wheeling above my head and creating a din. A cloud of earth moved not quite a foot from my feet. I picked it up to behold a Lapwing chick. I left it and while coming I charmed upon the roost of large fruit bats (flying foxes) on two large Banyan trees.

II. Extraordinary Behaviour of Pond Herons (Ardeola grayii)

By:- Rajeev Mathew

On 30th of May as I sat watching the nest of a pair of Golden Backed Wood Peckers at the Public Gardens I saw quite a number of Pond Herons flying over the pond by the banks of which I sat. I saw these birds plunge into the water trying to catch fish. Some even swam after a plunge in the water. This behaviour seemed very curious and a better way of getting at the fish. This I observed in the early hours of the morning between 6.00 and 8.00. In the afternoon and evening they did no such thing. Any solution?

III. An Unusual Flock of Hoopes

By:- B.C.Choudhury

Hoopoes (Upupa epops) are not a very common sight in the wilderness of Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad. However, immediately after the onset of monsoon; from July till about December-January, Hoopoes are more frequently seen, either in pairs or [illegible] picking up grubs or insects from the ground. The most common place to locate them is the dry moats of various enclosures of the zoo.

But, they are also seen on the lawns and the roadsides, seldom three or four individuals are observed closely. Very together

In September 1983, there were more Hoopoes to be seen than usual. On a cloudy day of September I was surprised to observe a flock of Hoopoes on the ground near a White ant-hill. From a distance they appeared to be over ten in number. Such a large flock being unusual, I approached closer and the flock flew. My count resulted in observing 14 individuals. Thinking the anthill might have been their cause for a congregation, I checked the area, but except for a slight dampness of the anthill - perhaps the result of the rains, nothing unusual could be seen. In my several observations following this I haven't been able to observe such a congregation of Hoopoes again.

However, this observation has resulted in observing three to four Hoopoes being found together at one time.

Should be under lines

IV. SOME OBSERVATIONS AT THE NEST OF AN INDIAN TREE PIE (DENTROCITTA VAGABUNDA)

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad - 12

From end of July 1983 to mid August 1983, I watched a pair of Tree Pies (Dendrocitta vagabunda) nesting. Some observations are given below.

Habitat:- Suburban Hyderabad. Roadside village, surrounded by open rock-strewn country, with paddies here and there. Main trees are neem, babool, tamarind, banyan and toddy palms.

Nest Site:- On a tamarind tree, c. 30 feet above ground level. The tree stands inside a factory compound - with nothing else growing within a radius of 60 feet.

Nest:- An untidy collection of twigs, mainly acacia sps. It is bristling with thorns. Perhaps lined with softer material within (as mentioned in the Handbook). Nest is shallower than a crows'.

Date:	Time:	Observations:
28/7/1983	1200 hrs.	One bird on nest. Sits close with tail protruding straight out over edge.
30/7/1983	1650 hrs to 1705 hrs	Bird not on nest, but arrives with in 5 minutes. Both birds come and seem to clean nest. There are 2 chicks inside - blind, naked, weak. They strain with open beaks for food. Both birds feed chicks by bringing up food from their crops.
04/8/1983	1200 hrs	Bird on nest, young not seen. Bird flies off. Another bird comes to nest and brings up greenish food by jerks of head and neck but swallows this and flies off. No movement inside nest.

09/8/1983	1120 hrs	3 young visible in nest. One parent feeds 2 chicks - although all 3 are straining for food. Then it picks up and swallows a white fecal-sac from periphery of nest.
14/8/1983	1755 hrs	Nest seems empty and still. Edges of nest are spattered with white droppings. After 3 minutes, one nestling is visible, smaller than a Brahminy Myna. It has a deep-red gape. The feathers on the forehead, head, nape and throat are the dark smoky brown of an adult. A yellowish-buff colour is appearing on the body. Flight feathers are not developed, but are darkly coloured - the small shafts (like a fine brush) are white at the base. Begging attitude is by shivering wings and opening red gape wide.
		Both parents arrive at nest in quick succession. The first one feeds first, followed by the second. After the 2nd adult feeds it, the chick raises its hind end and exhudes a grecnish coloured feaces which the 2nd parent gets hold of and swallows as it comes out.
18/8/1983	1145 hrs	One parent feeding solitary chick. Latter's beak is horny grey with dirty-yellow at gape and red inside. The primaries and secondaries are black and the scapulars and primary and secondary wing-coverts a light grey. Parents passes food to nestling 3 times simultaneously. Nesting - preening actively. Nest looks shabby.
	1159 hrs	Nestling fluffs out feathers and utters a feeble and shaky 'ke-e-e-e' with slightly open mandibles. Its eyes are chestnut-brown in colour.
22/8/1983	1200 hrs	Nest deserted. Neither parents nor fledgeling seen in vicinity.

Discussion:-

It was observed that the chicks never clamoured for food. Any audible sound when an adult came with food must have been extremely feeble - for I did not hear anything until the 18th.

Parents fed the young by bringing up food from the crop after much nodding and bowing and shaking the head from side to side - presumably working the food up into the beak. From one observation, it seems that a parent is motivated to feed young by the red colour inside latter's gape. On 4/8/1983, the parent brought up the food, but there was no movement in the nest, no gaping beaks, and perhaps that is why it swallowed the food back and flew off. Examination of feaces below the nest revealed a light brown, half digested berry whose skin and pulp was clearly seen.

Since the nest was found late, only post-hatching observations could be made. According to field notes, the chicks, after hatching left the nest after 22-24 days. However, Usha Ganguli in a Guide to the Birds of the Delhi area, mentions a fledgling period of 14 days.

The tail of the young bird was not seen on any occasion. Of the original 3 chicks, 2 were not seen after 14/8/1983. I do not know what happened to them. The outcome of the last one too is not known - since I did not witness it leave the nest, nor was there any evidence of it on subsequent trips to the area.

V. WHITETHROATED MUNIAS (Lonchura malabarica) PECKING SALT

By:- Nasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad - 12

On the 12th of February 1984, I was in Mahavir Harina Vanasthali, birding. This is a deer park on the outskirts of Hyderabad City, with various ungulates like Cheetal, Blackbuck, Chinkara and Chowsingha. To supplement the salt intake of these animals, forest officials have hung blocks of salt, from wires, at convenient heights from trees at various points. At one of these blocks, a Whitethroated Munia (Lonchura malabarica) was perched on the wire, and, as I watched, the bird slid down, onto the block and began pecking it: It continued pecking for 2-3 minutes, when another Whitethroated Munia came to the block and both pecked briskly for a few more minutes. There were 6 more Munias in the Babool (Acacia arabica) from which the salt-block was suspended - but they didn't come down. After a full 5 minutes, our friends joined the larger flock and all flew off together.

SOCIETY NEWS:

1. During the 1st quarter of 1984 (Jan - Mar.) the members went on field trips to Himavathsagar & Chilkur (8/1), ICRISAT, Pathancheru (22/1), Ibrahimpatnam (5/2), Nehru Zoological Park (19/2), Shamirpet (4/3), Vanasthalipuram (25/3).

2. At the regular monthly meeting held at the Forest Department, a very interesting talk on 'Flocking instincts or mixed party associations of birds -- Observation in Royal Chitwan Park, Nepal' was given by Mr. Hashim Tyabji (16/3) followed by a slide show & talk on 'Bustards & their territory' by Mr. Pushp Kumar, our President.

3. It is observed that several members have not yet paid their membership dues for 1984. This is your Society & without your support & without your help it will not be possible to do all that we have envisaged in the coming years. So, please renew your membership and also enlist new members.

4. Membership badges are available for sale at Rs.3/- each (Rs.5/- for non-members) also, Field List cards are available at Rs.5/- per 10 cards. Those desirous of purchasing these items may contact the Hon. Secretary. Members are advised to use the Field Cards for recording the birds during the field trips.

5. You would have observed that this issue has a new look -- an illustrated printed cover. In future also Mayura will continue to look as handsome as it does today. Owing to paucity of funds the

same type of cover will be used for all the issues of this volume & probably the next also. Funds permitting, we propose to include photographs of birds, preferably those taken by our members, from the next year. Your comments are invited. It is hoped that in future more members (and also others) will send material for publication or otherwise it will not be possible to bring out future issues also in time, & surely none of us would like this to happen.

COMMENT:-

"Indian Roller as State Bird"

Indian Roller or Blue Jay (Coracius bengalensis) is a common bird seen in open country. This beautiful bird has great value/importance in Andhra Pradesh. The people of Andhra Pradesh compulsorily see the bird on Dassera day as far as possible. The bird is caught and brought by the persons who just give a glimpse of the bird for a nominal charge. Later on the bird is released. Nobody kills the bird as it is thought to be divine. Thus the bird is protected. It is commonly known as "Pala Pitta"

So, as the bird has got some religious importance, I propose to have this beautiful bird as our "State Bird"

Deepak Chowdhury

BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

The Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh was founded in 1980 with the object of spreading the message of bird conservation. Services to members include fortnightly field-trips, slide and film shows, discussions and talks; MAYURA, the quarterly newsletter, ID cards, field tick-lists and badges. Membership of the Society is open to persons of either sex & of any nationality, scientific societies, institutions, clubs & companies. Corporate Membership is available for persons in their official capacity. For membership and contributing articles to MAYURA, and advertisements, contact the Hon. Secretary, Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, 6-3-249/3, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

—: o :—

Membership Fee :

Ordinary	.....	Rs. 25/- p. a.
Life	.....	Rs. 300/-
Students	.....	Rs. 15/- p.a.
Corporate	.....	Rs. 100/- p.a.

For Advertisement Tarrif :

Contact Hony. Secretary

OFFICE BEARERS

Pushp Kumar	President
S. Ashok Kumar Maj. A.A. Aziz	} Vice Presidents
Siraj A. Taher	Hon. Secretary
T. Deendayal	Hon. Treasurer

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

a) To inculcate in the people, especially the youth, a spirit of adventure, a love & appreciation of the beauties of nature, especially the avifauna.

b) To impress upon the people the role of avifauna in life on earth & the urgent need for their protection and conservation.

c) To inculcate in the people a sense of responsibility towards maintaining the environment in a good state & the protection of the other inhabitants of this earth & particularly the avifauna.

d) To work for the protection & conservation of bird sanctuaries, parks & habitats generally all over India & particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

e) To promote amongst the people, the knowledge of ornithology in all its branches including particularly the study of bird life of the Oriental Regions, particulary India & the adjoining zeogeographical regions; both alive & otherwise.

f) To carry out research in all branches of ornithology and to assist with information & advice as well as financially where possible, other institutions & individuals in similar pursuits.

g) To provide, equip, maintain & replenish a museum & other repositories for birds, both living or dead, which are suitable & necessary for the study of birds.

h) To do all or any of the above mentioned acts solely or with another or others, for joint management or collaboration or affiliation or any other arrangements with societies or persons having similar or allied objects which may further or benefit the objects of this society.

—: o :—

Front Cover :

INDIAN COURSER (*Cursorius coromadnelicus*). A sandy brown cursorial bird lacking the double breast bands of the extremely rare Jerdon's courser. Resident and patchily distributed in appropriate habitats in Andhra Pradesh. Unlike the Jerdon's Courser which was reported only from the Pennar and Godavary valleys of A. P.

Photographs : Courtesy, O. C. Edwards.

Back Cover

INDIAN KOEL (*Eudynamys scolopacea*). Female (shown in the photo) is dark brown and white barred. The Male is glistening metallic black, with yellowish green bill. Resident & local migratory, it is a very common bird in Andhra Pradesh. Brood parasitic on other birds.

MAYURA

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRD-WATCHERS' SOCIETY OF A.P.

AASHEESH PITTIE

Vol 5: No. 2 JUN 1984

BIRD SANCTUARIES OF ANDHRA PRADESH

KOLLERU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located in West Godavari District.
Area :	673 Sq. Kms. (Depending on the water spread)
Habitat :	It is a marsh with shallow water spread.
Birds Found :	Large number of Garganey Teals, Common Teals, Pochards, Spotbills, Brahminy Ducks, Openbill Storks Herons, occasionally Flamingoes. Grey Pelicans which used to visit this area have become rarer due to various causes.
Season :	October to March.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary can be approached by road from Eluru, the District Headquarters (on N.H. 7) which is just 10 Kms. away. In the Sanctuary area small dinghies or dugouts can be used for approaching birds.
Airport :	Vijayawada — 70 Kms.
Accomodation :	P. W. D. Rest House in Eluru, the District Headquarters.

PULICAT SANCTUARY

Location :	60 Kms. north of Madras City on N. H. 5
Area :	500 Sq. Kms.
Habitat :	A vast coastal shallow brackish lake along the east coast of the Bay of Bengal. The backwaters of the sea attracts a large number of migratory water birds.
Birds Found :	Large congregation of Flamingoes, Grey, Pelicans, Ducks, Teals, Storks, Terns, Herons, Gulls and a number of waders.
Accessibility :	The Bird Sanctuary can be approached by road from Nellore on the G. T. road (NH. 5). The nearest railway station is Sulurpet. Madras City is about 60 Kms. from the Sanctuary to the south by road & rail.
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 60 Kms., Tirupati — 90 Kms.
Accomodation :	Travellers Bungalow at Sulurpet.

NELAPATTU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located on the East Coast, about 20 Kms. north of Pulicat Bird Sanctuary in Nellore District.
Habitat :	A small fresh water irrigation tank in the village of Nelapattu, with Barringtonia trees in the water spread on which the water birds nest.
Birds Found :	Grey Pelicans are found nesting on the Barringtonia trees in the tank bed. Other nesting birds include Cormorants, White Ibis, Night Heron, Openbill Storks etc. The villagers offer full protection to these birds.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary is approachable from the Madras-Vijayawada Highway (NH. 5). Also by rail from Doravarichatram railway station on the Nellore—Madras line. (1 Km.)
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 100 Kms., Tirupati — 120 Kms.

For further details contact : Divisional Forest Officer (WLM) at the respective District Headquarters

OR The Chief Wildlife Warden
Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
Saifabad, HYDERABAD-500 004

MAYURA

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

VOL: 5 APRIL - JUNE 1984 NO: 2

10-3-1985

IN THIS ISSUE:-

PAGE NO.

* Survey of the Birds of Andhra Pradesh-13 - by Pushp Kumar 32

* Birds of Agricultural Importance in Andhra Pradesh - by Dr. N. Shivanarayan 33

* Recording of first and last sightings of annual migrants in and around Hyderabad with notes on general distribution - by Aasheesh Pittie 36

* A Pre-monsoon birding day at Ethipothala Falls - by B.C. Choudhury 38

* Nesting of Birds and Flowering of Trees - by Aasheesh Pittie & N. Shiva Kumar 40

* Miscellaneous Notes:-

I. Whiteheaded Babblers attacking cobra - by Deepak Choudhury 43

II. Nesting of Ashy Swallow-Shrike -by T. Ganesh & P. Kannaiah 45

III. Indian Pitta found in Hyderabad City - by Humayun Taher 46

IV. On fruit-eating birds and seed dispersal - by B.C. Choudhury 47

V. Sighting of a rare bird in the Agricultural College, Rajendarnagar,- by S. Sreenivasa Rao 48

* N E W S 48

* Comment -- Lavkumar Kachar 49

Indexed Birdindex Placerf APBIBLIO

26/9/84

Editorial Board:

B.C.Choudhury
Aasheesh Pittie
N. Shiva Kumar
Taqiuddin Ansari

****

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

****

SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - 13

By:- Pushp Kumar, I.F.S.

PHEASANTS:-Phasianidae (contd. from Vol.5, No.1 page 4)

SPURFOWL:- Two species are reported from the State, of these "half fowls-half partridges", mostly from well forested tracts.

RED SPURFOWL Galloperdix Spadicea spadicea (Gmelin)

Telugu:- Yerra Kodi, Chinna Kodi, Jitta Kodi

Urdu:- Choti Jungli Murgi

Resident through out the State in well forested tracts and bamboo stands in dry deciduous forests. Seen in Mamandur, Ananthagiri hills in the Eastern Ghats of Visakhapatnam, dry deciduous teak and bamboo forests of Adilabad, GBM plateau in the Nallamalais, Mannanur plateau etc.

PAINTED SPURFOWL Galloperdix lunulata (Valenciennes)

Telugu:- Jitta Kodi

Urdu:- Choti Jungli Murghi

Resident throughout the State in well forested areas in hilly country with outcrops of rocks. Seen in Mannanur in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary in a mixed dry deciduous habitat where flushed out from the bushes and grass stands by the passage of a vehicle, crosses the road and vanishes again into the bush. Also seen in the Kawal Sanctuary in predominantly teak forest with heavy stands of bamboo.

JUNGLEFOWL:-Two species occur in the State. As for some other species of animals like the Macaques, Andhra Pradesh also appears to be the divide between the distributional ranges of these two species of Fowl. The Red Junglefowl is limited roughly to the East of the River Godavari and the Grey Junglefowl to the West approximately. As the name implies both species occur in dense forest areas.

INDIAN RED JUNGLEFOWL Gallus gallus murghi, Robinson & Kloss

Telugu:- Yerra Adavi Kodi, Karkodi

Urdu:- Jungli Murghi

Resident. High dense forests of the Eastern Ghats in the Papikonda Sanctuary (in which area it is also found on the West of the River Godavari) North-Eastwards to the Salur and Palkonda Hill Ranges. Often seen in the Departmental Coffee plantations around Raghavendra Nagar and Chintapalli where the low and well stocked coffee bushes afford good cover. Comes out of cover in the early mornings when seen on the inspection paths and tracks. It is at this time that it is often caught by the local tribals who also gather eggs and

raise in their homes. A number of these birds were thus obtained for Vizag Zoo. The role of this bird (along with many others) in keeping the insect population in check in the coffee plantations is considered quite significant (Is this why a number of birds are found in coffee plantations?).

GREY JUNGLEFOWL Gallus sonneratii Temminck

Telugu:- Tella Adavikodi, Karkodi

Urdu:- Jungli Murghi

Resident. Dense mixed deciduous forests with or without teak and bamboo throughout the State. Heard more often in hilly country. Often seen on forest tracks and roads in Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary, GPM Plateau in the Nallamalais, around the Tirumala enclosure in the Seshachala Hills, in teak forests of Kawal Sanctuary in Adilabad District along the Pranahita River, Eturnagaram Sanctuary in Warangal District etc. Also reported from east of the Godavari in the Bhadrachalam Agency area. The exact line of contact between this species and the Red Junglefowl is not quite worked out.

INDIAN PEAFOWL Pavo cristatus - Linneeus

Telugu:- Nemli, Mayuri

Urdu:- Mor

Resident. Throughout the State in dry deciduous forests, in moist forest localities, along stream banks, etc. On the Mannanur Plateau in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary along the ghat roads, seen invariably, which lead the warden to name a particular place as Peacock Corner. In Eturnagaram Sanctuary seen in small groups in young teak plantation areas of Venkatapur. Commensal of man where raised from young and kept in constant touch, otherwise shy and keeps its distance. Groups of birds released in Vanasthali vanished for two years to reappear suddenly thereafter. A young male raised in the Srisailam temple precincts now seldom seen.

BIRDS & AGRICULTURE

BIRDS OF AGRICULTURAL IMPORTANCE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Dr.N.Shivanarayan, Ornithologist, A.P.Agricultural University, Lusectory buildings, Veterinary College Campus, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500 030.

Birds form an important group of vertebrates, not only because they are the most beautiful and colourful or because they are melodious singers but also because they have a significant role to play in agriculture. This aspect is generally overlooked and birds are considered as objects for amusement. It is therefore felt pertinent that some information on the common birds of economic importance is passed on to the members of the Society through this article.

The roles played by birds in agriculture are mainly of two types, viz., as protectors and destroyers of crops. In the first category (protectors) the insect eating birds commonly feeding on the neighbourhood of cultivation are included. The insects consumed by them are mostly those which are injurious to crops. The birds that are regularly noticed in a farmland feeding on insects are the Black Drongo (Dicrurus adsimilis) Indian Roller (Coraicas benghalensis), Redrumped Swallow (Hirundo daurica), Common Swallow (H. rustica) which is migratory, Shrikes (Lanius spp.), Small Green Bee Eater (Merops orientalis) and Indian Myna (Acridotheres tristis). These birds feed on a variety of insects which include those harmful to crops and thus keep a natural check on the insect pest population. These birds are therefore considered as " friends of farmer " and deserve to be protected and conserved.

However, many of us are not aware that a few species of birds also seen in and around cultivation are crop pests at times causing significant loss in agricultural production. The species of birds found damaging the crops are Roseringed Parakeet, Weaver Birds, Munias, House Sparrow, House Crow and Indian Myna. These birds are usually seen in flocks and severity of loss is magnified when they are in large flocks. The crop lossess due to bird pests are not consistent in a region or season due to factors like variation in population of birds, acreage of crops and ecology of the area, like availability of perching and breeding sites. Damage by birds occur on a wide variety of crops, viz., rice, wheat, maize, sorghum, bajra, sunflower and safflower. Birds start feeding on the grains which are in the 'soft and milk' stages and continue till almost the harvest of the crop, i.e., for a period of about 20 days. Fruits and vegetables may also be pierced and eaten by a variety of birds. In view of the crop depradatory nature by birds, it is important to know the species responsible for causing damage. A brief description of the bird pests and the crops damaged by them are given below.

Roseringed Parakeet:-

Distributed throughout the country and is very commonly seen in gardens, orchards and cultivated areas. Roseringed Parakeet is considered as the most numerous and most destructive among the avian pest species. The bird feeds on a variety of economically important food like paddy, sorghum, wheat, maize, sunflower, safflower, various fruits and vegetables. Among the crops mentioned the parakeet is a major pest on sunflower damaging upto sixty percent of the crop when the crop is left unprotected. A single parakeet in captivity consumes 15.0 grams of sunflower a day and this means that if there is a flock of 100 birds, the loss of sunflower seeds is 1500 grams in a day.

Weaver Birds:-

Three species of weaver birds, viz., Indian Baya (Ploceus philippinus) Streaked weaver bird (P. manyar) and Blackthroated weaver bird (P. benghalensis) are recorded in the State.

All the weaver birds feed on rice, sorghum and bajra and because of their seed eating habits, these birds are usually found in and around cultivation and grasslands. The weaver birds play a dual role in our agriculture. The adult birds are mostly seed eaters while the young are fed on soft bodied insect food. Thus they help in controlling the insect pest of crops to some extent.

House Sparrow:-

Like Weaver Birds, feeds on seeds, cereal grains and insects. The crops damaged by the Sparrow are paddy, sorghum, wheat and bajra. House Sparrows are very commonly seen in and near human habitations and being poor fliers are not a problem when the crops are raised far away from villages. House Sparrow and Indian Baya, both weighing on an average 20 grams, consumes about 5 - 6 grams of paddy a day which is equivalent to about 25 percent of their body weight.

Munias:-

Munias are seen around reeds, tall grasses, light scrub-jungle and cultivation. The food of Munias consists mainly of grass and weed seeds, insects and cereal grains. They damage paddy, sorghum and bajra crops. The three species of Munias recorded damaging the crop in the State are White throated Munia (Lonchura malabarica), Spotted Munia (L. punctulata) and Blackheaded Munia (L. malacca). A munia which is smaller in size than the Weaver Bird or Sparrow weighs about 10.0 grams but consumes 3 - 4 grams of paddy, equivalent to almost 30 percent of its body weight.

Crows:-

Both Jungle Crow (Corvus macrorhynchos) and House Crow (C. splendens) in certain places become crop pests. They feed on sown seeds of sorghum, maize and groundnut and also standing crops of sorghum and maize at grain maturing stage.

Pigeons:-

Blue Rock Pigeon (Columba livia), though not a serious pest on standing crops, is a problem bird on stored grains and it also picks up the sown seeds of sorghum and maize.

Indian Myna:-

This bird has already been refered to as useful in view of its insect eating habit. However, besides insects and grubs the food of Myna includes grains of sorghum and fruits (Grapes and Guava)

Recognising the impact of birds on our agriculture and the need to preserve species of useful nature, research programmes are taken up by All India Coordinated Research Project on Economic Ornithology at different centres in the country on various Ornithological aspects and pest management.

- -

RECORDING OF FIRST AND LAST SIGHTINGS OF ANNUAL MIGRANTS IN AND AROUND HYDERABAD, WITH NOTES ON GENERAL DISTRIBUTION-IV

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370, Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-12.

Continued from page 9 of Vol.5 No.1

XII Muscicapidae: Sylviinae:-

1. GREAT REED WARBLER Acrocephalus stentoreus brunnescens (Jerdon).

A widespread species throughout the lower Palaearctic regions and northern Oriental realm. Also found in western Australia. In India, it is a common breeder in the Northwest. Sporadic breeding records from various places on the subcontinent are also reported. However, in most of India, it is a winter visitor or a passage migrant, arriving around September and departing by May.

First Date: 27th December Place: Shamirpet

Last Date: 20th March Place: Nehru Zoological Park

2. BLYTH'S REED WARBLER Acrocephalus dumetorum Blyth.

Breeds in the central Palaearctic and extreme Northwest tip of the subcontinent. In winter, great numbers migrate to southern regions, spreading out through the subcontinent, Burma, Baluchistan and Sri Lanka. The main body of migrants arrives in India in September and leaves by April, though some remain till May, especially in Northwest India. Common in winter around Hyderabad.

First Date: 19th December Place: Nehru Zoological Park

Last Date: 26th March Place: Hyderabad City

3. LESSER WHITETHROAT Sylvia curruca sp? (Linnaeus)

Breeds in a wide belt through central and southern Palaearctic and extreme northern Oriental realms - from Great Britain in the west to Mongolia in the east. Winters south of this range in Northeast Africa, sparsely in the Middle East and throughout the Indian Subcontinent. They arrive in August in Northern India, spreading to the south by September end. Most of them are gone by end May. Occassionally seen around Hyderabad.

First Date: 5th December Place: Shamirpet

Last Date: 27th March Place:Nehru Zoological Park

XII Muscicapidae: Turdinae:-

1. BLACK REDSTART Phoenicurus ochrurus rufiventris (Vieillot)

Breeds in the Palaearctic, from Europe in the west to Northern China in the east. Of the two races that occur in India, both, phoenicuroides and rufiventris breed in Northwest India. In winter however, the former restricts itself to a line from Baroda (Gujarat) to ~~Etawah~~ (U.P.), while the latter spreads downward into Peninsular India, upto Tamil Nadu. Migration

is from mid September to March. Males precede the arrival of females by approximately 3 weeks. Common around Hyderabad.

First Date: 8th October Place: Nehru Zoological Park

Last Date: 14th March Place: Rajendranagar

XIII Motacillidae:-

1. GREY WAGTAIL Motacilla cinerea cinerea (Tunstall)

Breeds in the mountainous regions of the Palearctic. In the Indian Subcontinent it breeds in Pakistan, North India (Kashmir) and Nepal. Winters in regions south of breeding areas. Spreads throughout the Subcontinent. Arrives by end of August and departs by early May. This bird is known for its attachment to specific wintering quarters and clockwork punctuality. Very common in and around Hyderabad.

First date: 6th September Place: Nehru Zoological Park

Last Date: 22nd March Place: Nehru Zoological Park

2. WHITE WAGTAIL Motacilla alba sp? Linnaeus

A widespread Palearctic breeder, wintering in the southern regions of the breeding range. Migration into the Subcontinent commences in September and by end of April, most birds return to breeding grounds. Two races occur around Hyderabad, dukhunensis and personata. The former being commoner of the two.

First Date: 14th October Place: Hyderabad City

Last Date: 27th March Place: Himayat Sagar

XIV Emberizidae:-

1. GREYNECKED BUNTING Emberiza buchanani buchanani Blyth

Breeds in the southern and central Palaearctic regions in a narrow belt from Armenia to the Altai. Breeds also in Northern Baluchistan. Winters in the Subcontinent from October to April. All records around Hyderabad, are from Shamirpet.

First Date: 5th December Place: Shamirpet

Last Date: 13th February Place: Shamirpet

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:- I thank Capt. N S Tyabji for his valuable suggestions and advice and constant encouragement.

REFERENCES:-

Ali, S & Ripley, S D (1983) - Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, Compact Edition.

Henry, G M (1978) - A Guide to the Birds of Ceylon

Ripley, S D (1982) - A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan, 2nd edition.

CONCLUDED

- -

A PREMONSOON BIRDING DAY AT ETHIPOTHALA FALLS

By:- B.C.Choudhury, N.Shiva Kumar and K.Varaprasad, Hyderabad

Ethipothala Falls is located 13 Kms below the Nagarjunasagar dam site. Chandravanka stream a tributary to Krishna river, 3 km before joining the Krishna, falls from a height of 25 m to form a spectacular waterfall and helps this area in supporting a lush green vegetation amidst the surrounding thorny scrub forest. The fall, just a trickle in summer spreads beautifully in a 100m horse-shoe shape in monsoon and winter. Alternating pools and rapids below the falls, flowing through reeds and granite boulders, provide habitat for many forms of flora and fauna - some quite uncharacteristic of the surrounding area. Sharp high cliffs on two sides and the waterfall on one side gives this area an appearance of an amphitheatre.

The deep pools, besides supporting mugger crocodiles (Crocodylus palustris), also harbour some of the giant soft shelled turtles (Tryonix sp). The thick vegetation and geomorphology of the streambed below the falls provides a home for foxes, jackals, porcupines and mongooses. The rare black tail-tipped Ruddy Mongoose (Herpestes smithi) is also found in this area. The caves on the cliffs are full of insectivorous bats.

For Prasad and BC, who work with the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department Crocodile Conservation Project, Ethipothala Falls is a familiar site. Being a field station of the project, this place has been visited by them often since 1978. But for Shiva who works for the Government of India Tourist Department, Ethipothala was new. The 19th June 1984 visit to Ethipothala thrilled Shiva so much that he intends to recommend this location to any tourist with the slightest inclination for nature and wildlife. His interest being insects, the sighting of quite a few species of butterflies and a giant cicada made his day. We also came across a variety of Herps which included 10 chequered keelback watersnakes, a couple of rat snakes and a beautiful cat snake (Boiga sp.). Skinks (Mabuya sp.) and the Agamids (Sitana sp.) far outnumbered the common garden lizard (Calotes sp.) and the Rock Lizard (Psammophilus) in the rocky and scrub areas of the region.

Besides the scrub jungle birds of South India, many other species found in slightly moist areas are also found at Ethipothala which now constitutes a part of the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Project Tiger Reserve.

During our six hour stay (10 am to 4 pm) we decided to walk downstream from the falls. Our hurried trip found us without a pair of binoculars but the relatively close approach to birds in the thick vegetation made it possible to identify many of them fairly easily.

Birds seen at Ethipothala Falls on 19th June 1984.

1. Pond Heron Ardeola grayii (in breeding plumage)
2. Purple Heron Ardea purpurea (a lone individual was seen)
3. Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis
4. Little Egret Egretta garzetta
5. Chestnut Bittern Ixobrychus cinnamomeus
6. Yellow Bittern Ixobrychus sinensis
7. Short-toed Eagle Circaetus gallicus (probably nesting nearby)
8. Grey Partridge Francolinus pondicerianus (very common)
9. Whitebreasted Waterhen Amaurornis phoenicurus (with chicks)
10. Bronzewinged Jacana Metopidius indicus
11. Redwattled lapwing Vanellus indicus
12. Blue Rock Pigeons Columba livia (in the cliff holes in large numbers)
13. Spotted Dove Streptopelia chinensis
14. Ring Dove S.decaocto
15. Little Brown Dove S senegalensis (very common)
16. Roseringed Parakeet Psittacula krameri (in hundreds on cliff)
17. Koel Eudynamys scolopacea
18. Crow-Pheasant Centropus sinensis
19. Indian Nightjar Caprimulgus asiaticus
20. Palm Swift Cypsiurus parvus
21. Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis
22. House Swift Apus affinis
23. Whitebreasted Kingfisher Halcyon smyrnensis
24. Small Green Bee-eater Merops orientalis (many juveniles)
25. Redwinged Bush Lark Mirafra erythroptera
26. Redrumped Swallow Hirundo daurica (red rump is pale)
27. Dusky Crag Martin H concolor (very common near the falls)
28. Baybacked Shrike Lanius vittatus
29. Black Drongo Dicrurus adsimilis
30. Common Myna Acridotheres tristis
31. House Crow Corvus splendens
32. Small Minivet Pericrocotus cinnamomeus
33. Iora Aegithina tiphia
34. Red Vented Bulbul Pycnonotus cafer (very common)
35. Whiteheaded Babbler Turdoides affinis
36. Whitespotted Fantail Flycatcher Rhipidura albicollis (very common)
37. Brown Flycatcher Muscicapa latirostris
38. Ashy Wren - Warbler Prinia socialis
39. Tailor Bird Orthotomus sutorius (nesting)
40. Indian Robin Saxicoloides fulicata
41. Whitebrowed Bulbul Pycnonotus luteolus
42. Large Pied Wagtail Motacilla maderaspatensis (common)
43. Purplerumped Sunbird Nectarinia zeylonica
44. Purple Sunbird N.asiatica
45. Blackbellied Finch-Lark Eremopterix grisea (very common)
46. Baya Ploceus philippinus (nesting)
47. Streaked Weaver Bird P.manyar (nesting)
48. Whitethroated Munia Lonchura malabarica
49. Spotted Munia L.punctulata
50. Blackheaded Munia L. malacca (large flocks near the reeds)
51. Peacocks (Heard)

Some of the Warblers could not be identified, as also some of the raptors flying overhead. As the day was slightly cloudy these could not be observed clearly.

Eventhough we appreciated the food and cooldrinks of the tourist guest house located abutting the waterfall, the debris thrown by visitors in the form of empty bottles, wrappers, etc., into the Fall and surrounding areas showed the level of vandalism that goes on. Colorful exotic garden plants amidst the wilderness could have been avoided. Perhaps it would be ideal to open the guest house only from 5am to 6pm for visitor-use like most facilities that exist in the sanctum sanctorum of any wilderness area. Perhaps a better use of the place would be to convert it into an information-cum-interpretation centre.

- -

THE NESTING OF BIRDS AND FLOWERING OF TREES

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-12, and
N Shiva Kumar, A/37 A B Nagar, Karawan, Hyderabad-267

NESTING BIRDS:

1. POND HERON Ardeola grayii

27/5/1984 Birds in breeding plumage, seen in Indira Park, Hyderabad City.

2. SHIKRA Accipiter badius

a) 8/4/1984 One nest on Neem (Azadirachta indica), 20' to 25' up, in Banjara Hills. Bird building nest.

22/4/1984 Bird on nest - incubating?

20/5/1984 No sign of nest. Reportedly no brood raised.

Outcome: Unknown.

b) 19/4/1984 Siraj Taher reports; one nest on Neem (Azadirachta indica), 20' to 25' high, in Banjara Hills.

22/4/1984 Five chicks in white down and black beak visible. Adult feeding and sheltering them from sun.

4/5/1984 Five chicks - one observed climbing on edge of nest.

11/5/1984 Nest missing - vandalised by miscreants.

Outcome: Failure.

c) 3rd week of April: One nest in unidentified tree, 30' up, in Banjara Hills, Adults feeding nestlings.

Outcome: Unknown.

d) 1st week of May: One nest in a Babool (Acacia arabica) in Banjara Hills, with 2 chicks. Outcome: Unknown.

3. INDIAN MOORHEN Gallinula chloropus

24/6/1984 Two families in Nehru Zoological Park, with 2 and 3 young respectively - active on ponds

Outcome: Successful

4. BRONZEWINGED JACANA Metopidius indicus

29/5/1984 One pair observed mating on a lily pond in Public Gardens (Hyderabad City). Also, two pairs combining to chase each other on lily ponds - territoriality?

5. REDWATTLED LAPWING Vanellus indicus

a) 25/4/1984 One nest in Banjara Hills, with 2 eggs. Birds incubating.
2/5/1984 Nest abandoned. Outcome: Failure

b) 24/5/1984 One nest in Sanjivayya Park (Hyderabad City) with 1 egg seen by Mr O.C.Edwards. Outcome: Unknown

c) 8/6/1984 Kothapet (Hyderabad District), 2 nests with 3 eggs each. One near a bush, one on open ground
17/6/1984 Nests not visible. Outcome: Failure

d) 24/6/1984 Three immature birds in Nehru Zoological Park, Smaller than adults and lacking wattle. Adults protective, chasing away House Crows (Corvus splendens).
Outcome: Successful

6. STONE CURLEW Burhinus oedicnemus

a) 1/4/1984 Banjara Hills, one nest with an egg at 9.a.m. and 2 eggs at noon
13/4/1984 Bird incubating
16/4/1984 One egg missing (Predation?)
7/5/1984 Bird still incubating one egg.
11/5/1984 Both egg and birds are not seen. Birds had incubated for 37 days (one egg) at least. Incubation period in India is not known but for the European bird (Burhinus oedicnemus) it is 25-28 days.
Outcome: Failure

b) 8/4/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, one nest with 2 eggs. Birds incubating. A couple of days later, it was found destroyed, most probably by the animals in that enclosure.
Outcome: Failure

7. RED TURTLE DOVE Streptopelia tranquebarica

8/6/1984 Kothapet (Hyderabad District), two nests on a Babool (Acacia arabica), one with chick, other with bird incubating. Outcome: Unknown

8. SPOTTED DOVE Streptopelia chinensis

8/4/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, one nest in a Purpule Bauhinia (Bauhinia purpurea), 10' above ground. One egg visible. Bird on, does not move when approached to within 3'. (Laying?). Time 1000 hours. Two days later the nest had disappeared. Outcome: Failure.

9. LITTLE BROWN DOVE Streptopelia senegalensis

8/6/1984 Kothapet (Hyderabad District), bird on nest in Babool (Acacia arabica). Outcome: Unknown

10. INDIAN ROLLER Coracias bengalensis

May 1984 Begum Pet (Hyderabad city), one nest with chicks. Outcome: Unknown

11. COPPERSMITH Megalaima haemacephala

22-28/4/1984 Banjara Hills, one nest-hole in dead tree. Adults seen feeding young. Outcome: Unknown

12. GOLDENBACKED WOODPECKER Dinopium benghalense

20/5/1984 Public Gardens (Hyderabad city), one nest in a Date Palm (Phoenix sylvestris), 9' above ground. Adults seen feeding young. Subsequently 3 young fledged from nest (dates not known). Outcome: Successful.

13. GOLDEN ORIOLE Oriolus oriolus

24/6/1984 One nest in the Nehru Zoological Park on a Babool (Acacia arabica), 15' above ground level. Birds seen incubating. Outcome: Successful

14. BLACK DRONGO Dicrurus adsimilis

a) 8/4/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, one nest in Babool (Acacia arabica), 25' up, being built

b) 27/5/1984 Indira Park (Hyderabad city), one bird seen collecting nesting material.

c) 8/6/1984 Kothapet (Hyderabad district), one nest in Babool (Acacia arabica), with an egg.
17/6/1984 One nestling seen in nest. Outcome of the 3 nestlings: Unknown

15. INDIAN MYNA Acridotheres tristis

27/5/1984 Indira Park, one bird seen taking nesting material into a Palm.

16. INDIAN TREE PIE Dendrocitta vagabunda

27/4/1984 Hyderabad City, one nest in a Neem (Azadirachta indica), 25' up. Bird incubating. Outcome: Unknown

17. BLACKHEADED CUCKOO-SHRIKE Coracina melanoptera

24/6/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, one nest in a Bauhinia (Bauhinia purpurea), 15' up and very shabby. A male seen singing on tree and entering nest. Subsequently the nest disappeared. Outcome: Failure.

18. ASHY WREN WARBLER Prinia socialis

8/6/1984 Kothapet (Hyderabad district), one nest with eggs. Outcome: Unknown.

19. TAILOR BIRD Orthotomus sutorius

29/4/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, one nest in a Bauhinia (B. purpurea), 12' up. Bird seen carrying nesting material to it. Outcome: Unknown.

20. MAGPIE ROBIN Copsychus saularis

24/5/1984 Banjara Hills, one nest built in an earthenware pot (originally kept on a pole for pigeons).
1/6/1984 First egg seen
4/6/1984 Four eggs, female incubating
19/6/1984 One chick seen
22/6/1984 Three chicks being fed by parents
30/6/1984 Only two young seen. One addled egg removed from nest.
3/7/1984 Two young fledged and flew out into garden. Being fed by adults. Outcome: Successful

21. STREAKED WEAVER BIRD Ploceus manyar

27/5/1984 Indira Park, males in breeding plumage, seen carrying nesting material and singing

22. BLACKHEADED MUNIA Lonchura malacca

24/6/1984 Nehru Zoological Park, birds seen collecting nesting material

FLOWERING TREES:

1. BAOBAB TREES:Adansonia digitata:- Very few of these giant and gnarled trees are surviving in and around the twin cities. The one in the compound of the office of The Board of Higher Secondary Education next to Stanely College was first noticed in bloom on the 18th of May. The flowers are large, whitish with lots of stamens and a thick stigma sticking out in the middle. The flowers burst open from large buds that are almost the size of tennis balls, fleshy, green and often mistaken for fruits. Flowers are nocturnal-blooming and 'live' only for the night and wither as day dawns.

2. POMEGRANATE Punica granatum:- The flowering period of this tree continued into April and May.

3. CURRY-LEAF PLANT Marraya koenigii:- Commonly called the 'Karrepak', it is a hardy but small tree, prevalent in most kitchen gardens yet rarely allowed to flower and bear fruit as it is heavily pruned for the leaves are used to flavour various Indian dishes. In April and May, clumps of whitish-green flowers appeared lasting 4-7 days and were slowly replaced by ball-bearing-sized fruits which enlarged into marble sized fruits in about a month.

4. DRUMSTICK Moringa oleifera:- Another favourite of the kitchen garden, is a tall but fragile and soft-wooded tree known as Drumstick, which was flowering sporadically earlier and put forth large number of blossoms in May and June. It gets heavily

laden with small whitish and yellow flowers hanging in clusters. The ground is littered with hundreds of these flowers as insects, squirrels and birds 'attack' them for their nectar.

5. GUAVA Psidium guajava:- Continues to flower in this quarter

6. PAPAYA Carica papaya:- Flowering started in mid June. The hollow, erect and branchless trees are usually dioecious, that is, male and female flowers sprout on separate plants. The male tree bears flowers on pendulous stalks flowering profusely, most of them are dropped to the ground by sunbirds who sip-up the nectar off the small whitish but aromatic flowers. The female flowers on the other hand are comparatively few but large and fleshy, growing on the main stem of the plant at the axils of the leaves. Some trees are bisexual (Hermophrodite) bearing both the male and the female flowers on the same tree. Pollination has been observed to be initiated by bees and birds.

7. HIBISCUS Hibiscus rosa sinensis & Hibiscus president:- These are perennial shrubs with showy flowers grown in most gardens and parks, usually in bloom all round the year, but abundant in June. In the hot summer months, sparrows were observed feeding on the petals probably for the water content in them.

8. POINSETTIA or CHRISTMAS PLANT Euphoribia pulcherrima:- An ornamental shrub with hollow branches and colourful leaves at the branch tips that 'pretend' to be petals. The actual flowers are small and inconspicuous with a dash of green on yellow appearing in small groups. The scarlet l aves give the appearance of large flowers, thus very attractive. The first flowers became apparent in mid May, continuing into June.

- -

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:

By:- Deepak Chowdhury

It was 5th Sep.1982, I was passing through the landscape garden (Osmania University campus). The time was about 4 p.m. It had rained that day for 1-1½ hours around 2 p.m. It was still drizzling. Suddenly, I saw a 3 feet long Cobra climbing a Gulmohor tree, within seconds a flock of 10-15 Whiteheaded Babblers attacked the cobra with their beaks. The cobra could not withstand the attack and started climbing down. For sometime it hissed at the birds but could not defend itself, the birds'cackling call became so harsh that many people collected at this unforgettable scene. I hope they will remember this scene of "struggle for existence" for many a day.

Some mere birds attacking a deadly cobra is what one cannot believe unless he sees for himself. The cobra unable to bear the attack rushed into the thicket hide, but the birds kept hovering around trying to locate their enemy. After sometime they calmed down and went back to Gulmohor tree. The cobra after few minutes dashed out of the bush and vanished into a snake pit.

Out of curiosity I went to the Gulmohor tree to investigate the cause of the onslaught, there I saw a nest 10-12 feet above ground and could hear chirping of young birds. To save their fledgelings, a whole family united to drive away a dreadful snake, their enemy.

- -

II. Nesting of Ashy Swallow-Shrike (Artamus fuscus) in Alwal

By:- T.Ganesh and P.Kannaiah, Secunderabad-500 015

On top of a tall Palmyra tree nested the Ashy Swallow-Shrike, at the base of a thick leaf-stalk at an angle to the trunk. The Ashy Swallow-Shrike is a slaty grey bird, size of a bulbul, but more squatt with pale underparts and rump, wings are swallow like and tail is short. Bill is heavy, sparrow-like and bluish-white in colour.

We discovered this birds' nest on 26th May when it was feeding its chicks. At this stage the chicks were making a feeble - check, check, check which is also a part of the adults' call. Around the nest perched on a lamp post or power line were six adult birds of which four were seen feeding the chicks in turns, of the other two we could not observe much. During the initial days, after our discovery of the nest, the birds, at times, left the chicks unguarded and went in search for food and quite often they were away for 10 minutes or so, returning to the nest with some 'baby food'. The birds were often seen preying on insects in the air and only once we saw them picking a butterfly from the ground in just one swoop down at its prey. (This was observed after the arrival of monsoon).

As the days went by the chicks grew rapidly and their calls/ chirps, loud and clear, could be heard at 30 to 35 feet from the palm. Their demand for food was now great and the parent birds had to feed them twice as fast as when the chicks were very small and also they had to keep a close watch on the nest since the chicks were impatient to fly out. They were also very aggressive and virtually every bird straying into their territory was attacked, the exceptions being Palm Swift (Cypsiurus parvus). Sometimes the birds formed a coordinated team to fight large birds like crows, which were one of their worst enemies.

On 6th June we saw two chicks perched on a lamp post while two still remained in the nest. These fledgelings in the nest were looked after by only two adult birds. Now, it seems that two seperate broods were raised in the same nest since the two chicks seen outside the nest were fed by two other birds. By 12th June the nest was empty and all the chicks (total four) were seen huddling together on power line just in front of their birth place. The young birds were fed by their parents on a palm tree or a power line or a lamp post. These were the only places chosen by the birds to alight. On the chicks, plumage resembled the adults and we only made them out by their difference of size.

With the arrival of rains accompanied by strong breeze all the birds were seen flying high into the air and then slowly descending with spread out wings, circling over the place till they reached a lower limit after which they straightened out heading towards a palm or other resting place. Sometimes they even fell straight down as if they had lost balance. For the young birds it was a test to sharpen their flying skill and many a time, as always with the young, they tried to keep away from these exercises.

III. Indian Pitta (Pitta brachyura) found in Hyderabad City

By:- Humayun Taher S/o Mr.S A Taher, 6-3-249/3, Rd.No.1
Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034

On 10th May, 1984 one of the members of the Bird Watcher's Society of Andhra Pradesh came to our house with a dead bird for us to identify. It proved to be the Indian Pitta (Pitta brachyura) which he claimed to have found near his house. The bird had apparently flown into a power line thereby getting a very nasty blow and it had died almost instantly. There was a fairly deep cut near the neck probably got by flying into the wire.

The next day we took the bird to a photo studio and had it photographed in colour. Then we gave it to a taxidermist for stuffing and mounting.

Later when the man got the bird to our house after stuffing, he said that the intestines were in a very advanced state of decomposition. Hence the specimen could not be stuffed properly. He also said that he had found a lot of fat under the skin and in the abdomen of the bird. This proved that the bird was probably on migration.

The Indian Pitta is reported in Hyderabad as a passage migrant, but this is probably the first time that an actual specimen has been found. There have been unconfirmed reports of this bird being sighted in scrub and heavy bushes once at the Nehru Zoological Park in 1983 and twice at a house garden in 1982 and 1983. On both occasions it was visible for a short period and only once in each year.

The Pied Crested Cuckoo (Clamator jacobinus) was sighted at Hyderabad City by one of our members Rajeev Mathew on the 28th of May, '84, near Somajiguda. This was brought to the notice of the press and it was carried in several newspapers, both local & national on 1.6.1984. One of them under the heading 'The cuckoo arrives, monsoon is around'.

News clipping: DECCAN CHRONICLE' - 15th June, 1984.

'Heavy rains in City'-- The first heaavy rains of the current monsoon season lashed the twin-cities this morning. The downpour which began shortly after 6-30 p.m., came down heavily on the city for well over two hours and continued intermittently in the night also. ----- However, the hundreds of stranded & drenched people were heard welcoming arrival of the monsoon with such a bang.

On fruit-eating Birds and Seed dispersal

By:- B.C.Choudhury, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad-500 264

Vilayiti imli, Gorakh imli, Jungle jalebi are some of the common Indian names of the plant Pithecolobium dulce (formerly Inga dulcis). In local telugu language it is called Seema chintakaya. International name for this Philipine origin (some consider it to be of Philipine origin) tree is Manila tamarind. Its edible coiled pods are in the shape of a monkeys ear lobe hence the name Pithecolobium. In penninsular India this tree flowers during January to March and the fruits come during the hot season upto early June. The pinkish pulp of the fruit is edible and has a sweetish taste.

At Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, in the man made wilderness at least 20% of the trees are Pithecolobium and increasing in number day by day though this species is no longer planted.

Our winged friends who eat the sweetish pulps of the fruit help in the dispersal of its seeds. Seeds dispersed during the hot months are self-sown and aided by the following monsoon months strike roots. This relationship of birds depending on a tree for food and the tree on birds for self propagation is an excellent example of symbiosis.

From April to June 1984 a list was made of birds observed feeding on Vilayaiti imli. Though several other bird species were observed feeding on the flower and some feeding on insects attracted to ripening fruit (pulps) only those feeding on fruit pulps figured in the list.

Birds observed feeding on Pithecolobium dulce fruit pulps

1. Roseringed Parakeet (Psittacula krameri)
2. Blossomheaded Parakeet (Psittacula cyanocephala)
3. Koel (Eudynamys scolopacea)
4. Brainfever Bird (Cuculus varius)
5. Coppersmith (Megalaima haemacephala)
6. Redvented Bulbul (Pycnonotus cafer)
7. Whitebrowed Bulbul (Pycnonotus luteolus)
8. Golden Oriole (Oriolus oriolus)
9. Rosy Pastor (Sturnus roseus)
10. Indian Myna (Acridotheres tristis)
11. Brahminy Myna (Sturnus pagodarum)
12. House Crow (Corvus splendens)
13. Blackheaded Cuckoo-shrike (Coracina melanoptera) ??
14. Large Cuckoo-shrike (Caracina novaehollandiae) ??
15. Tree pie (Dentrocitta vagabunda) ??

The last three listed were observed several times on Pithecolobium dulce tree. It is however not confirmed if they feed on the fruit pulps.

In its extensive distribution range Pithecolobium dulce fruits must be supporting many other species of birds as food. Any other addition to this list is welcome.

V. Sighting of 9 rare birds in Agril.College, R.Nagar

By:- Srinivas S. Rao, 86,LIGH, APHB Colony, Moula Ali Hyderabad-40.

I was really happy at the sighting of Paradise Flycatcher in our college. It was very interesting to watch this bird on the morning of June 17, 1984, at about 11.15 a.m. I saw it resting on a Peltophorum tree. It was an adult male with the characteristic long tail. It was there only for 5 minutes and later flew away. This was the first time that I saw this bird in our college.

- -

NEWS:-

1. During the 2nd quarter of 1984 (April-June) the members went for field trips to Rajendranagar and Himayathsagar (15/4) Indira and Sanjivayya Parks (27/5) and Kothapet (17/6)

2. The regular monthly meetings were held at the Forest Department at which the following films and slide shows were screened. On 25/4 Mr.N.G.Reddy, one of our members showed us some of his excellent slides of 'Birds at Bharatpur Sanctuary' and 'Tulip and tulip gardens of Amsterdam'. At a very well attended meeting on 9/5, Mr.Shanker of Shankar Films screened his film 'Pelicans of Nelapattu' for our members. This is probably the first Indian film made depicting the complete life cycle of a bird. The problems of pollution and development and the havoc this has caused and is causing to one of the last breeding grounds of the Spottebilled or Gray Pelicans has been very well brought out in this beautiful film. This film was shot about exclusively in Nelapattu and nearby Pulicat Bird Sanctuary in Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh.

3. Some interesting articles and notes have been received for publication but the material is still woefully short. This causes unnecessary delays in the publication of the bulletin. Unless members take a little more interest in their bird watching and observations and then seriously sit down to send their notes and articles, it is feared that the situation will get aggravated. Do not be hesitant and doubtful of your prowess at recording your observations. Anything that is truthfully observed and factually recorded will be definitely worth sending in. Who knows, yours may be the first observation of 'its' kind and such reports have their own importance. So all you budding bird buffs and writers, pick up your binoculars and pen and paper, you have nothing to lose, but the Society will gain.

3. A report from Rapur in Nellore District:- Nefarious killing and trafficking of wildlife treasures is being systematically and regularly carried-out in this Taluq.

Poachers and profit-makers are clandestinely making a fast buck inspite of the ban on hunting. While antlers and skins of birds constitute the bulk of illegal deals, the main target is the Indian Jungle Fowl. In developed countries, its plumage is sold at unbelievably high rates. The hunters ensnare the birds and skin off their colourful plumage and feathers. This is sold to illicit traders here and at Venkatagiri at Rs.20/- to Rs.25/-. The next market is Madras where the skins fetch between Rs.100/- to Rs.150/-

- Newstime -

4. Two pairs of Blyth's Tragopan (Tragopanus blythii) have been lent to the World Pheasant Association in the U.K. by the Indian State of Nagaland for breeding with the eventual aim of releasing the offspring in the wild. The birds inhabit moist high-altitude forests in northern Burma and eastern India where they have suffered badly from the effects of logging; probably no more than 1000 remain.

ORYX - Vol.18, No.1

- -

COMMENT:-

Dear Aasheesh,

Thank you for sending me issues of Mayura. It is really commendable how you all have kept this newsletter alive and vigorous for so long. What pleases me more is the fact that you have desisted from producing national articles and made it a very Andhra newsletter. This is what I had suggested should be done in the very first instance when my opinion was asked for. As I remember saying then, national newsletters should be quoting regional news from your newsletter. Congratulations.

I was interested to read Rajeev Mathews' observations on the aerial feeding of Little Egrets. Last February I was guest of the Chairman, WWF-India, Bhopal Branch at his beautifully sited home on Shamla Hills overlooking the extensive Bhopal lake. I was surprised to find egrets flying slowly in circles over the large lake and from time to time swooping low down and making a grab at fish at the surface. This was the first time in my long birdwatching career I ever saw egrets fishing like this. It was facinating. It seems that there have recently been several reports from various parts of the country and as there is no mention of this mode of fishing in ornithological books, I would suggest you ask Mathews to prepare a short note and send it off to BNHS for reporting in their Journal.

Whenever I happen to be in Hyderabad, I shall look forward to being escorted by your young band of volunteers. Keep up the good show.

30th April,84

Lavkumar Khacher

14, Jayant Society
Rajkot-360 004

BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

The Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh was founded in 1980 with the object of spreading the message of bird conservation. Services to members include fortnightly field-trips, slide and film shows, discussions and talks; MAYURA, the quarterly newsletter, ID cards, field tick-lists and badges. Membership of the Society is open to persons of either sex & of any nationality, scientific societies, institutions, clubs & companies. Corporate Membership is available for persons in their official capacity. For membership and contributing articles to MAYURA, and advertisements, contact the Hon. Secretary, Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, 6-3-249/3, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

—: o :—

Membership Fee :

Ordinary	.....	Rs. 25/- p. a.
Life	.....	Rs. 300/-
Students	... ...	Rs. 15/- p.a.
Corporate	.....	Rs. 100/- p.a.

For Advertisement Tarrif :

Contact Hony. Secretary

OFFICE BEARERS

Fushp Kumar	President
S. Ashok Kumar Maj. A.A. Aziz	} Vice Presidents
Siraj A. Taher	Hon. Secretary
T. Deendayal	Hon. Treasurer

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

a) To inculcate in the people, especially the youth, a spirit of adventure, a love & appreciation of the beauties of nature, especially the avifauna.

b) To impress upon the people the role of avifauna in life on earth & the urgent need for their protection and conservation.

c) To inculcate in the people a sense of responsibility towards maintaining the environment in a good state & the protection of the other inhabitants of this earth & particularly the avifauna.

d) To work for the protection & conservation of bird sanctuaries, parks & habitats generally all over India & particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

e) To promote amongst the people, the knowledge of ornithology in all its branches including particularly the study of bird life of the Oriental Regions, particulary India & the adjoining zeogeographical regions; both alive & otherwise

f) To carry out research in all branches of ornithology and to assist with information & advice as well as financially where possible, other institutions & individuals in similar pursuits.

g) To provide, equip, maintain & replenish a museum or other repositories for birds, both living or dead, which are suitable & necessary for the study of birds.

h) To do all or any of the above mentioned acts solely or with another or others for joint management or collaboration or affiliation or any other thing with societies or persons having similar or allied objects which may further or benefit the objects of this society.

—: o :—

Front Cover :

INDIAN COURSER (*Cursorius coromadnelicus*). A sandy brown cursorial bird lacking the double breast bands of the extremely rare Jerdon's courser. Resident and patchily distributed in appropriate habitats in Andhra Pradesh. Unlike the Jerdon's Courser which was reported only from the Pennar and Godavary valleys of A. P.

photographs : Courtesy O. C. Edwards.

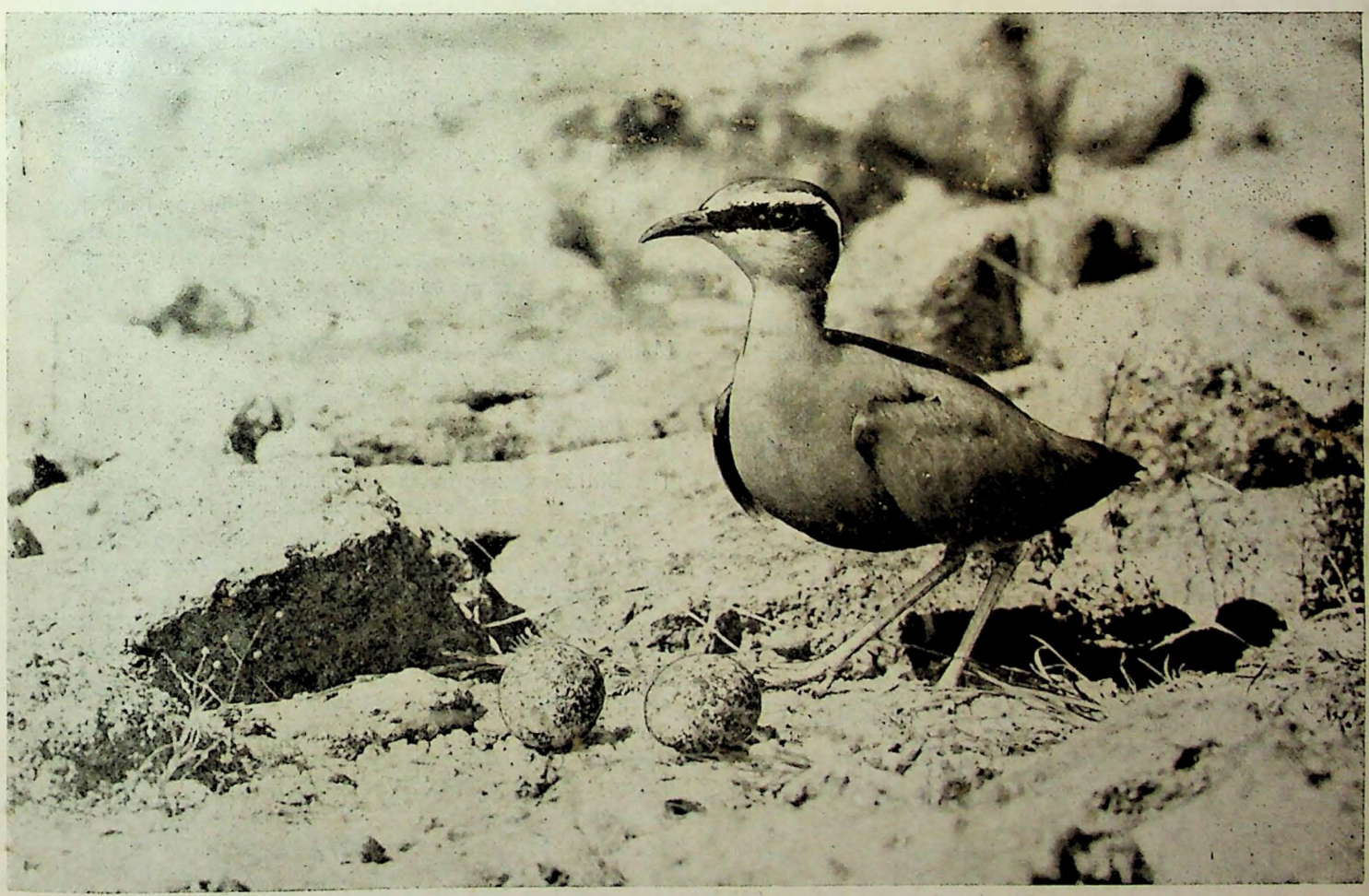
Back Cover

INDIAN KOEL (*Eudynamys scolopacea*). Female (shown in the photo) is dark brown and white barred. The Male is glistening metallic black, with yellowish green bill. Resident & local migratory, it is a very common bird in Andhra Pradesh. Brood parasitic on other birds.

MAYURA

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRD-WATCHERS' SOCIETY OF A.P.

Vol. 5: No. 3 SEP 1984



BIRD SANCTUARIES OF ANDHRA PRADESH

KOLLERU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located in West Godavari District.
Area :	673 Sq. Kms. (Depending on the water spread)
Habitat :	It is a marsh with shallow water spread.
Birds Found :	Large number of Garganey Teals, Common Teals, Pochards, Spotbills, Brahminy Ducks, Openbill Storks Herons, occasionally Flamingoes. Grey Pelicans which used to visit this area have become rarer due to various causes.
Season :	October to March.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary can be approached by road from Eluru, the District Headquarters (on N.H. 7) which is just 10 Kms. away. In the Sanctuary area small dinghies or dugouts can be used for approaching birds.
Airport :	Vijayawada — 70 Kms.
Accomodation :	P. W. D. Rest House in Eluru, the District Headquarters.

PULICAT SANCTUARY

Location :	60 Kms. north of Madras City on N. H. 5
Area :	500 Sq. Kms.
Habitat :	A vast coastal shallow brackish lake along the east coast of the Bay of Bengal. The backwaters of the sea attracts a large number of migratory water birds.
Birds Found :	Large congregation of Flamingoes, Grey, Pelicans, Ducks, Teals, Storks, Terns, Herons, Gulls and a number of waders.
Accessibility :	The Bird Sanctuary can be approached by road from Nellore on the G. T. road (NH. 5). The nearest railway station is Sulurpet. Madras City is about 60 Kms. from the Sanctuary to the south by road & rail.
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 60 Kms., Tirupati — 90 Kms.
Accomodation :	Travellers Bungalow at Sulurpet.

NELAPATTU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located on the East Coast, about 20 Kms. north of Pulicat Bird Sanctuary in Nellore District.
Habitat :	A small fresh water irrigation tank in the village of Nelapattu, with Barringtonia trees in the water spread on which the water birds nest.
Birds Found :	Grey Pelicans are found nesting on the Barringtonia trees in the tank bed. Other nesting birds include Cormorants, White Ibis, Night Heron, Openbill Storks etc. The villagers offer full protection to these birds.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary is approachable from the Madras-Vijayawada Highway (NH. 5). Also by rail from Doravarichatram railway station on the Nellore—Madras line. (1 Km.)
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 100 Kms., Tirupati — 120 Kms.

For further details contact : Divisional Forest Officer (WLM) at the respective District Headquarters

OR

The Chief Wildlife Warden
Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
Saifabad, HYDERABAD-500 004

NAYURA

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

VOL: 5 JULY - SEPTEMBER 1984 NO: 3

IN THIS ISSUE:-

	PAGE NO.
* Survey of the birds of Andhra Pradesh - 14 - By - Pushp Kumar	51
* The relationship between Typha reeds (Typha latifolia) and some birds - By - Aasheesh Pittie	53
* Birding in Rajendranagar, NIRD Campus and around - By - Dr S Tej Kumar	55
* Nesting of birds and flowering of trees - By - Aasheesh Pittie and N Shiva Kumar	57
* Miscellaneous notes:-	
I Roseringed Parakeets pecking salt - by Aasheesh Pittie	61
II Nesting of Wiretailed Swallows - by - T Ganesh & P Kannaiah	61
III Nesting of Redrumped Swallows in Alwal - by - T Ganesh & P Kannaiah	62
IV Causes of destruction of Black Drongo nests - by - B C Choudhury	63
V Observations on Pied Myna at Hind Motor - by - Deepak Chowdhury and Suparna Biswas	64
VI Tickell's Flowerpecker sipping nectar from Loranthus flowers - an observation - by - Aasheesh Pittie	64
* Gleanings.	65
* Society News.	66
* Comment - Siraj A Taher	68

Editorial Board:

Aasheesh Pittie
B C Choudhury
N Shiva Kumar
Taqiuddin Ansari

Date of publication: 8-7-1985

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

SURVEY OF THE BI DS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - 14

By:- Pushp Kumar, I.F.S.

Continued from Vol 5 No 2 page 33.

BUSTARD-QUAILS:- Turnicidae

This small group of interesting quail-like birds is well represented in the State. Though popularly called 'quails' they form a distinct group classified in a different Order (Gruiformes). Because of the similar habitats occupied by them, being termed 'game' birds, and their similarity of build, they are popularly clubbed with the quails. They are often overlooked because of their similarity to the quails. In the Bustard-Quails it's the male that carries out the function of raising the young, the female being polyandrous. This fact is also used to trap them. The traditional trappers like the Pardies in Hyderabad and the Yanadies in Nellore District are quick to use this fact and to distinguish them from the others in trapping and then selling. Bustard-quails occur throughout the State in habitats similar to those of the quails ie., grasslands and scrub forests. Bustard-quails have however also been found in dry deciduous forests.

Of the 3 species and 7 sub-species that are listed in the Sub-continent, representatives of all the 3 species are reported from the State.

LITTLE BUSTARD-QUAIL Turnix sylvatica dussumier (Temminck)

Telugu:- Chinna or Telladabba gundla

Urdu:- Chota Guttur

Resident. This quail-like bird is found patchily throughout the State in habitats similar to those of the true quails, hence often overlooked. The male and female look alike although the male hatches and looks after the chicks.

INDIAN YELLOWLEGGED BUTTON QUAIL Turnix tanki tanki Blyth

Telugu:- Yerra Chinna gundla

Urdu:- Lal Ghuttur

Resident. Found patchily throughout the State in grassland and scrub forests. Often crosses tracks in grasslands (Vanasthali) and walks in front of stationary jeep for a short distance before disappearing back into the grass. Then the three-toed yellow legs are quite prominent. Also seen in Nelapattu Sanctuary, quite frequently. Twice in the grassland at Rollapadu during July, on both occasions the reddish-collared female was seen.

INDIAN BUSTARD-QUAIL Turnix suscitator taigoor (Sykes)

Telugu:- Kalada (male); Pured (female)

Urdu:- Ghuttur

Resident. Throughout the State in low forest and grass-land. However usually the female (larger and more colourful than the male) is seen. Vanasthali and Chilkur around Hyderabad, Nelapattu Sanctuary in Nellore District, Vizag Zoo and many other places in the State are the habitats of this interesting species.

CRANES:- Gruidae.

These tall (some about 6') long-legged, usually grey or white and, unlike the Storks, vociferously endowed birds frequent marshes and dry grasslands.

Of the 15 forms found in the world, 6 species and 7 sub-species are reported from the Sub-continent. Of these 3 species are reported from Andhra Pradesh.

All three species are migrants to the State.

EASTERN COMMON CRANE Grus grus lilfordi Sharpe

Telugu:- Kurunchu Konga (?)

Urdu:- Kulang

Migrant to the State. Reported from Srikakulam and Vizianagaram Districts. Also a recent report (February 1985) of a large flock of cranes near Singur about 10 kilometers north-west of Hyderabad, which requires confirmation whether these aren't Demoiselles.

INDIAN SARUS CRANE Grus antigone antigone (Linnaeus)

Telugu:- Sarasu Konga (?)

Urdu:- Sarus

Non-resident. Reported only from the Godavari Delta areas in East and West Godavari Districts, especially the marshes and paddies near Kandikuppa.

DEMOISELLE CRANE Anthropoides virgo (Linnaeus)

Telugu:- Wada Koraka

Urdu:- Kulang

Migrant. This beautiful crane (the smallest of our cranes) is reported mostly from the dry western areas of Rayalaseema and Telangana. Large flocks (about 200 birds) reported from Rollapadu in Kurnool District and Midnal Mahbubnagar Dist . Possibly more frequent, especially during the migrations.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPHA REEDS (TYPHA LATIFOLIA) AND SOME BIRDS

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyd-500012.

It is fascinating how a niche develops around various habitats like, rocky areas, lakes, marshes, forests, etc. But what is more delightful, is the relationships which form, between different life-forms - all together comprising the niche. The study of these micro-niches is important because, when a part of them is threatened with extinction, invariably, the other forms of life associated with that part also face a bleak future.

Unhappily, the subject of this note, the Bulrush Typha latifolia, is threatened by the reclamation of areas where it proliferates - to make more living space for man. However, its prolific rate of growth has safeguarded its survival in an ideal habitat. This reed is also known as the 'Cattail' and is easily recognised by the rust coloured, velvety female flowers. The cattail is a plant growing in lakes, by edges of rivers and similar localities with a creeping underground stem, narrow, nearly flat leaves, 3 to 6 ft long, arranged in opposite rows, and a tall stem ending in a cylindrical spike, half to one foot long, of loosely packed male (above) and female (below) flowers. The shallowness and constant presence of water, the density of reed growth, and the abundance of humidity form an unique combination which produces a micro-habitat for myriads of varying life-forms. It forms an area rich in insects, crabs, molluscs, terrapins and of course, birds.

In what ways does the typha reed help various birds? Broadly, the uses to which birds put this reed can be divided into the following heads.

I As a feeding area,
II As a nesting area, and
III As a place of shelter.

Taking each of these heads individually, I would like to put forth my observations regarding the avifauna of a reed-bed in the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.

I As a feeding area:-

1. The Purple Moorhen Porphyrio porphyrio is often seen feeding on the tender young shoots of the bulrush. It grasps the plant in its beak and tugs and jerks till it comes out of the ground. Turning the plant, while transfering it to its foot, the moorhen peels off the outer covering with quick jerks of its beak. No sooner is the tender, juicy, central portion of the stem exposed, than it is bitten off and swallowed. The whole plant is finished off in this manner.

2. The Chestnut Bittern Ixobrychus cinnamomeus and the Yellow Bittern Ixobrychus sinensis are also found in this reed bed. They are usually seen early in the morning, or late in the evening, perched at odd angles on the margins of the beds, perhaps a foot above the water-level,

ready to snap up any unwary fish, frog or insect. They have a great deal of patience and have a blistering speed with the beak. Once I happened to disturb a delicate, yellow bittern while it was balanced upside-down, peering into the water. In a jiffy, it was up and straight as a ramrod - acting like a reed!

3. The Pond Heron Ardeola grayii is another bird that frequents the reeds to feed. In the typical heron stance, it sits either low on a reed stem, or in the shallows under the reeds awaiting a tiny fish to pass by.

4. The shy, furtive and crepuscular Brown Crake Amaurornis akool is seen occassionally, through gaps in the reeds, searching the slush for insects and worms, rhythically jerking its tail.

5. A surprise visitor once was the Painted Snipe Rostratula benghalensis, and it probed its beak into the squelchy mud beneath the reeds, searching for tiny insects, vegetable matter, etc.

II As a nesting area:-

The pliancy and abundance of the leaves of bulrush, make the reed bed an ideal nesting habitat for many rails and bitterns and some bayas and munias.

The Purple Moorhen bends the reeds and places leaves on these to form a platform nearly a meter above the ground. The eggs are laid on this platform. The Indian Moorhen Gallinula chloropus builds a similar nest, much lower in the reeds.

Bitterns also use the reeds as platforms (like the above two) and nest on them.

The Streaked Baya (Ploceus manyar)utilises the reeds in an unique way. It bends the leaves together and around them constructs its beautiful pouch-like, dangling nest, of coarse grass fibres.

Blackheaded Munias Lonchura malacca build their globular nests low down in a dense reed clump. These nests are made up of various grasses and also strips of cattail leaves.

Indirectly also, the reeds act as nesting material for some birds. One of them is the Tickell's Flowerpecker Dicaeum erythrorhynchos. I saw one bird making frequent trips to a reed stem, with prominent female flowers, and plucking them apart. (The familiar brown spide is a dense mass of minute one-seeded fruits, each on a long hair-like stalk, and covered with long downy hairs, which render the fruits very light and readily carried by the wing.) It flew away with a beakful of these!

III As a place of shelter:-

Many water birds, and quite a few perching birds are associated with the bulrushes in various ways. The reeds grow in such density, that they provide ample shelter to birds, from predators. Many crepuscular birds also spend the day inside the bulrushes.

Night Herons Nycticorax nycticorax spend their day within dense reeds, occassionally coming to the margins to pick fish. The Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis and Small Blue Kingfisher Alcedo atthis too come to rest on bent stalks of the cattail. Often one comes with a fish in the beak and balancing on the thin stem, excitedly swallows it.

Many rails swim close to reeds and duck into them as soon as they sight a Marsh Harrier Circus aeruginosus. The reeds form a hunting area for this winter migrant and one male regularly works the reed beds where these observations were made.

However, a marsh may be a smelly place. The rotting vegetation and stagnant water give off an odour which even the most stoic of birders try to avoid. But the marsh is considered to be a purifying factory of the air. And it produces copious quantities of oxygen. A marsh within and without a city is a boon which fights pollution and replensihes oxygen. Above all, it is a threatened habitat for life-forms. Especially birds.

BIRDING IN RAJENDRANAGAR, NIRD CAMPUS AND AROUND

By:- Dr S Tej Kumar, "Sreenivasa", 1-2-365, 20/C Domalguda, Hyderabad-500 029.

I was pleasantly surprised, when I got down from the vehicle along with a group of birdwatching colleagues of the Society on September 30, 1984, to see a good canopy of trees coming up in the campus of The National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) at Rajendranagar, suburb of Hyderabad, where there was none before. Like an oasis in the desert, surrounded by barren rocks, the NIRD campus, with beautiful trees like cassia, bauhinia and neem, provided a very good sanctuary to many species of birds.

The very first bird we saw was an attractive and sprightly male Small Minivet perched on a cassia branch. The bird being shy did not oblige us with its sweet melodious call for which it is noted, but we could hear a Golden Oriole calling distantly in equally sweet tone. To our right, in a bush attracted by a call, we could see a pair of Whitebrowed Bulbuls. A movement on a high branch of neem revealed the presence of appair of Blackheaded Cuckoo Shrikes and a pair of Common Ioras, not far off. A member pointed to a party of Brahminy Mynas busy unto themselves feeding near a fence. As we proceeded further,

we could see Little Brown Doves, Common Myna, Dusky Crag Martin, flying about. Telephone wires above our heads provided nice perching place for Small Green Bee Eaters out to catch bees and other flying insects. Black Drongos with their forked tails were not for off. Bluetailed Bee Eater, Pied Bush Chat and Indian Robin were all actively feeding and ocassionally resting on nearby bushes and fence wire [illegible] wings, one of which flew away as my friend tried to see through bincoular, calling 'Did he do it, pity to do it'. A call by now familiar to us.

As we crossed the fence and moved away to barren rocks from the well wooded campus we could spot Pariah Kite, Pallid Harrier, Egyptian Vulture and Crested Honey Buzzard. All raptors, flying high in wider circles, floating on the thermal currents. We could sense the lurking tragedy behind their leisurely flight. The undue interference of man with nature and consequent destruction of their numbers to a telling effect on these species, reducing their numbers to a precarious point. The time may not be far off when they can no longer fly high, leaving a birdwatcher sad.

The evidence of destruction was not far either. Blasting of huge and picturesque stones and perpetual clanging sounds of breaking stones replacing the sounds of birds, was one of the nails being struck into the coffin of a very painful, habitat's destruction. Our momentary happiness on discovering the arrival of migrant Blue Rock Thrush (a juvenile) on one of the stones marked for destruction, soon paled into sorrown. The beautiful stone formations, a gift of nature to Hyderabad need preservation for posterity. Unfortunately our protests may be very feeble unless joined by others equally concerned.

An exciting discovery of Whitebrowed Bulbul, Rock Pipit, nearby, by a younger member of our team had temporarily diverted our attention to the birds in a nearby tank also. Through binoculars we could spot Little Cormorants, Cotton Teals, Little Egrets and Marsh Harrier surveying above them.

The campus and the surrounding barren country was equally noteworthy for the beautiful butterfly fauna which gently glided from one bush to another splashing their colours on the wings. Notable among them were Pierids - the Orange Tip, Crimson tips, Yellows; especially Colitis and Ixias sp and Eurema hecaba, Common Jezebel, the Nymphalids, like Hypolimnas, Fritellaries, and Pansies like Lemon, and Blue Pansies, Papillionides like Tros species Papilio demoleus and others such as Telchinia and Lycaenids. Thinking of butterflies, the shrinking world of butterflies is very fascinating, with a variety of pleasing colours and shapes and with such fancy names as Admiral, Painted Lady, Arab Emirate, Purple Emperor, Purple Hairstreak, Tiger, Swallowtail and what not!

As the day grew hotter, we turned back. When we gathered on the lawns of Guest House of Nehru Zoological Park

later, the tally of the observed birds was a sizeable one of sixty. It was satisfying to note so many birds within a short span of two hours and many of them being uncommon. But for how long?!

THE NESTING OF BIRDS AND FLOWERING OF TREES

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyd - 500 012
and N Shiva Kumar, A/37 A B Nagar, Karawan, Hyd-500267.

NESTING BIRDS:

1. REDWATTLED LAPWING Vanellus indicus
   29/7/1984 One nest in Banjara Hills (Hyd), with 4 eggs. Birds incubating.
   31/7/1984 Birds incubating the 4 eggs at 1650 hours.
   05/8/1984 No eggs, nest disturbed. Pebble base scattered and bordering twigs also scattered. Outcome: Unknown.

2. CATTLE EGRET Bubulcus ibis
   05/8/1984 Birds in breeding plumage seen in Shamirpet and surrounding areas.

3. RING DOVE Streptopelia decaocto
   a) 01/7/1984 One bird seen with nesting material in its beak, in Mahavir Harin Vanasthali.
   b) 15/8/1984 Bird incubating 2 eggs in a flimsy nest in the fork of some branches of a Bauhinia, approx. 7' above ground. Outcome: Unknown.

4. WHITEBREASTED KINGFISHER Halcyon smyrnensis
   01/7/1984 Mahavir Harin Vanasthali. A family of 1 adult and 2 fledglings was seen near the open well. There were 2 possible nest-holes in the wall of the well; one on a bare wall, 4' above water; the other under vegetation, 4' above ground level and 10' from water's edge. One young larger than other. The chocolate brown and bright blue of adults is faded in both young. In the former (larger yng) the white shirt front is incomplete and marked with brown - giving a scaly appearance. In latter, it is not developed at all and there is in is place more brown than white. The throat of latter is white and a vague vertical line in the center of its chest is much encroached by brown. The bills of both yng are much smaller than an adults and black in colour with orangish-yellow tips. The toes are orangish with black streaks. The young are constantly calling to each other in a raspy 7 note cackle, rising, falling and rising again. Similar but slower in

speed than an adults' call.

08/7/1984 Mahavir Harin Vanasthali. One juvenile on bare branches over the well (water 3' below). The bill has grown to adult size, though still black. However it is tinged with an orange shade - the lower mandible being almost wholly dirty orange. Tip of bill still has an orange spot. The back, tail and flight feathers have achieved adult colours. Head, nape and neck are a rich chestnut. Throat and chest are whiter, but with very light brown cross-bars - giving a scaly appearance, and restricted to a vertical line in center of chest - ½ the width of an adults' shirt-front. Tarsii still black and red. Flight clumsy. Landing clumsy. But diving into water without hesitation. Wiping bill on branch after coming out of water; preening flight feathers too. The white patch on adult wings is still a very light blue colour - but quite distinguishable. Except for bill colour, width of white front, colour of tarsii and colour of wing patch - the plumage is like an adults. Undertail coverts are whitish.

5. ASHYCROWNED FINCH LARK Eremopterix grisea

05/8/1984 Shamirpet. Males behaving very territorially. Defending small territories, chasing other males vigorously and persuing females persistently. Much song-display also observed.

6. DUSKY CRAG MARTIN Hirundo concolor

17/8/1984 Jubilee Hills. One nest high up in rock formation, on vertical rock face. Contains 3 yng with open eyes. All facing over the rim of the nest.

7. BLACK DRONGO Dicrurus adsimilis

a) 01/7/1984 M H Vanasthali. One nest in a Butea monosperma, in outer branches, overhanging jeep track - well hidden by large leaves. About 12' high, contains 3 eggs which the bird is incubating. Flimsy nest, eggs visible through bottom.

08/7/1984 One chick seen. Bird on, but flies off on seeing me.

14/7/1984 Two chicks with open eyes and sprouting pins. Adult gives alarm on seeing us. Outcome: Unknown.

b) 01/7/1984 M H Vanasthali. One nest in outer branches of Butea, 20' up and overhanging a well. Bird on 2 eggs.

08/7/1984 Nest deserted and broken. Outcome: unsuccessful.

8. COMMON MYNA Acridotheres tristis
22/7/1984 Golconda Fort area. One bird seen carrying food in bill.

9. SMALL MINIVET Pericrocotus cinnamomeus
a) 01/7/1984 M H Vanasthali. Two males and one female constructing a nest in a Babool, about 10' above ground.
08/7/1984 Female on nest, male feeding her. No eggs.
14/7/1984 Nest deserted, but intact.
b) 01/7/1984 M H Vanasthali. A male seen carrying nesting material in bill.
08/7/1984 A nest in outer branches of a Butea, about 16' up. Two chicks visible. Adults feeding them. Female also brooding the yng, blind ones.
14/7/1984 Parents feeding 2 nestlings. Eyes open, actively flapping and preening. Tail of young not visible. Climbing onto rim of nest cup.
Outcome: Successful.

10. YELLOWEYED BABBLER Chrysomma sinense
07/9/1984 Shamirpet area. One nest in a Lantana bush, with 4 eggs. It is 2' 9" above ground, 3.5" in depth and 3" across. Bird incubating.
Outcome: Unknown.

11. FRANKLIN'S WREN WARBLER Prinia hodgsonii
07/9/1984 Shamirpet area. Males in breeding plumage and song.

12. INDIAN WREN WRRBLER Prinia subflava
15/8/1984 M H Vanasthali. Birds building a nest inside a small bush.
Outcome: Unknown

13. ASHY WREN WARBLER Prinia socialis
a) 22/7/1984 Golconda Fort area. One bird seen dashing into a bush with food in bill.
b) Another nest with 3 eggs was discovered by Humayun Taher.
Outcome: Unknown.

14. BAYA Ploceus philippinus
07/9/1984 Shamirpet area. A colony of 11 nests on a stunted tree, overhanging a pool. Males in breeding plumage. Three nests complete the rest under construction, and green in colour.

15. WHITETHROATED MUNIA Lonchura malabarica
07/9/1984 Shamirpet area. One bird seen bringing nesting material (flowering grass heads) into a stunted tamarind approx. 20' high.

FLOWERING TREES:

With the advent of rains, the surroundings of Hyderabad, which had looked so bare throughout summer, spring forth in greenery. Areas termed wastelands, around the city, regularly worked over by cattle, turn green with fresh grass. This is also the season for ephemeral flowering plants. For a short duration of 3-4 months, we see wild colour all around. Little flowers of various hues, yellows, reds, whites, etc., spring up everywhere. One particular specimen, Heliotropium zeylanicum, covers the rocky hillsides and bare grounds in extensive sheets of white flowers on green background. Unfortunately, most people do not notice these marvels of nature.

1. YESTERDAY-TODAY-TOMORROW Dichrostachys cinerea:- This hardy shrub is quite common around Hyderabad and was in flower from the begining of July. The plant derives its name from the colour of the flowers. The upper part of the flower is yellow, the lower half a light purplish. Some flowers have white lower-halfs. The three colours in the same shrub or tree have given it the english name of Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow.

2. LANTANA Lantana indica and L aculeata:- Flowering profusely through this quarter. Very popular with butterflies and birds especially the bulbuls. In many areas has acquired the dubious distinction of weed proportions.

3. Heliotropium zeylanicum:- A minute ephemeral monsoonal plant covering vast stretches of bare land with greenery and white flowers. Looks like a white carpet from the distance. Very short flowering season of 2-3 months.

4. Tribulus terrestris:- An ephemeral of the monsoons, this plant bears small yellow flowers of five petals. A small shrub, it is seen in good numbers on undisturbed wasteland. A big field full of these flowers was seen by members of the BSAP on their trip to the Golconda Fort area on 22nd July.

5. Legasca mollis:- Another common monsoonal ephemeral. Each plant grows about 6" and has 1½" long alternate leaves. At the nodes of these leaves, small spiky red flowers bloom.

6. Ipomoea sp:- Common all around Hyderabad on wasteland where it grows as natural hedgerows. Blister beetles with red spots are particularly fond of the flowers and cluster to them in some numbers. Sunbirds too frequent them often.

7. SANDALWOOD Santalum album:- Most of the trees in the Nehru Zoological Park are in flower. Eventhough cutting this tree is punishable by law, one does not see a specimen in the wilderness. But in the zoo

and other public gardens of the city, they grow well.

8. INDIAN WILD DATE (Khajur) Phoenix sylvestris:- Flowering sparsely in the first week of July and found growing mostly in the suburban areas of the city. This palm is often tapped for toddy.

9. FISH TAIL PALM / SAGO PALM Caryota urens:- Surviving all along the Tankbund of the Hussain Sagar lake but a few, very good specimens are found in the Nehru Zoological Park and the Public Gardens. They have Long dangling inflorescences. Flowering noticed in mid-August and September.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:

I Roseringed Parakeets (Psittacula krameri) Pecking Salt:

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyd-12.

On 24 June 1984, Binod Choudhury and I were birding in the Nehru Zoological Park and near the Sambhar enclosure we saw three Roseringed Parakeets (Psittacula krameri) clinging onto a block of salt, suspended from a tree for the Sambhars' benefit - and pecking at it! A few more parakeets were perched on top of the tree. After a few moments all flew away.

A similar behaviour was reported of Whitethroated Munias (Lonchura malabarica), in these columns in the last issue.

II Nesting of Wiretailed Swallows (Hirundo smithii):

By:- T Ganesh, 16/112 Sainagar Colony, Trimulghery, Sec-15.
and P Kannaiah, 128 Balaji Colony, Kakaguda, Sec-15.

A new railway line connecting Moul Ali and Sanathnagar passes through Alwal. On either side of the railway line, paddy is cultivated. The surrounding place is dotted with trees like Babul, Tamarind, Palms, etc. Plenty of water is found throughout the year, except in summer. For free passage of water, many culverts pass under the railway line.

In one such culvert, we saw a nest. It was cup-shaped, stuck against the ceiling of the culvert. This nest was spotted on the evening of 15 April 1984. We also saw chicks inside it. But did not see how many chicks were there. Adult birds were seen perched on a power line facing the culvert. The birds would fly for the winged insects high up in the air. Adult birds were seen hunting their prey only to feed the chicks in turns.

The summer had set in. It was the month of May. Water flow through the culvert had ceased and paddy harvested.

On 10 May, two chicks were seen huddled close to parent birds, perched on power-line. We were not sure whether the birds had abandoned the nest. During the flight, chicks were also found in the company of parent birds. Adults birds would fly with rapid wing strokes followed by usual glide. These would feed the aerial prey to the chicks.

The chicks were bright, glossy blue above, pure white below. Chestnut colour on the top of their head was not clearly seen. Flight like any adult, swift and graceful. A few days later we found the nest missing from its place and also the swallows.

With the onset of monsoon, the chicks and adult birds were seen at the same place, again. By then, the chicks were in juvenile plumage. The wire-tail was developing. The chestnut colour on head was not clear. Last but not the least, the chicks were independent. We saw these juveniles taking long and swift flights to capture aerial prey.

Thus ended the successful rearing of chicks from infancy by two beautiful, agile, and graceful birds called Wire-tailed Swallows!

III Nesting of Redrumped Swallows (Hirundo daurica) in Alwal:

By:- T Ganesh, 16/112 Sainagar Colony, Trimulghery, Sec-15, and P Kanaiah, 128 Balaji Colony, Kakaguda, Sec-15.

We did not observe much about this bird, but what little we saw is given below.

We came across the nest of this bird around 28 April 1984 in a dry culvert. It was made up of mud pellets stuck together to form a long tubular entrance ending in a hemispherical egg chamber. The complete structure was stuck to the curved roof of the culvert. The diameter of the entrance was about 38mm. The culvert was the size of a large drainage pipe and small animals like goats and calves passed through it daily. It was completely dry and hardly anything was cultivated nearby. This culvert was about 200 meters away from the one in which the Wire-tailed Swallows (H. smithii) nested.

Two adult Redrumped Swallows were seen perched on a power line facing the culvert. These were the nesting birds and it was observed that they roosted in their nest. Around 10 June, 2 fledglings, nearly full-grown, were seen with the adult swallows on the power line. These birds flew remarkably well and only ocassionally did we see the adult birds feed them.

IV Causes of destruction of Black Drongo (Dicrurus adsimilis) nests:

By:- B C Choudhury, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyd-264.

Black Drongo Dicrurus adsimilis makes a cup shaped nest of fine twig and fibres cememted with cobwebs, on the fork of a branch at a height of 12 to 20 feet, in large trees. For a bird of its size the nest usually looks too fragile. Perhaps they nest throughout the year but nests are seen more often during the months of April to July. In Nehru Zoological Park, Black Drongos have been seen making nests in trees such as Babul Acacia arabica, Siris Albizzia lebbek, Rain Tree Samania saman, Yellow Gulmohar Peltophorum ferrugineum, Kasod Tree Cassia siamea, Flame of the Forest or Palas Butea frondosa.

Between April 15 to July 15 1984 a total of 14 nests were monitored of which only three (3) nests hatched out and chicks were reared upto fledgling stage.

Months:	April	May	June	July	Total
Tree sp;					
1 Acacia arabica	1*	2@	1h	1*	5
2 Siris albizzia	-	3@	1?	1h	5
3 Cassia siamea	-	1*	1*	-	2
4 Peltophorum ferrugineum	-	-	1h	-	1
5 Samania saman	-	-	-	1?	1

Legend:-

* - Nest bottom open and eggs fallen to the ground.
@ - The sudden heavy wind and rain caused the branches to fall down and the nests lost.
? - Cause of nest loss not known.
h - Hatched.

Out of fourteen nests only three (21.42%) hatched successfully. Six nests were lost to rain and storm (42.86%). Four (28.57%) nests were lost due to the nest bottom being open and eggs falling to the ground. One nest (7.14%) loss cause could not be ascertained. Though the shape of the nest was intanct, neither the eggs nor the parents could be detected anywhere near. Predation of eggs is suspected.

Most of the nests located were in trees close to the road. The nest incubating parents used to fly out the sooner anything approached close to their nest. This constant movement must have made the fragile nests to break. All the nests were at an height of less than 15 feet except the one found on the Rain Tree, which was at an height of about 25 feet.

V Observations on Pied Myna (Sturnus contra) at Hind Motor:

By:- Deepak Chowdhury, M S.c and Suparna Biswas, B A.

It was late winter, 3rd week of February, 1984 at Hindmotor, 32 kms from Calcutta. I observed the feeding behaviour of Pied Myna, seen abundantly in these areas. During early hours and late evenings 10-12 birds are usually seen in groups busy feeding on worms, insects and grains. They are usually seen near garbage or dustbins. They are locally called as "Faecal matter-eating myna", but it is not the case. What I observed was, the worms present in putrified faecal matter were devoured by these birds.

During the daytime one can see single or paired ones, but not groups. I saw a huge nest on a Mango tree, 15 ft above the ground on the fork of a branch. The nest was made up of grass, twigs and the entrance to it was on one side, oblique. This nest was seen during my next visit to Hindmotor in the last week of June 1984. The whole area was under floods. It had rained for the last 10 days. But the parents were busy feeding their fledglings drenched completely in rain.

EDITOR'S NOTE:- The Pied Myna is distributed across Northern and Eastern continental India - coming down to Hyderabad and the Krishna river delta (c. 16°N lat.) in Andhra Pradesh. This being its southern-most limit on record.

VI Tickell's Flowerpecker (Dicaeum erythrorhynchos) sipping nectar from Loranthus (Loranthus longiflorus) flowers - an observation:

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-12.

While birding one day (26-2-1984) in the Nehru Zoological Park, I got a good glimpse at the feeding methods of the Tickell's Flowerpecker Dicaeum erythrorhynchos on the nectar of Loranthus Loranthus longiflorus flowers.

Many clumps of this parasite were in flower. But there were quite a few buds also. One particular cluster hung low on the branch of a Neem Azadirachta indica tree - and on this I watched the birds' behaviour.

1984 Mayura 5(3):64-65

It arrived with the usual bustle and immediately got down to work. The flowers which were open did not pose any problem - and the bird dipped in its beak through the top and sipped the nectar. I did not even think that the unopened flowers would interest the flowerpecker. How wrong I was! Holding the bud firmly in its foot, it grasped the top part in its bill and with a twisting-slide of the head, popped the flower open. Then it fed normally - fully immersing the beak inside. And it popped open innumerable flowers as it went through the cluster!

The flower of the Loranthus is shaped perfectly for the beak of sunbirds - which incidentally are its' chief pollinators. A drop or two of nectar is situated at the bottom of the flower, from where it is sipped up by the tubular tongue of the sunbirds. Sunbirds are known to press the buds gently and 'explode' them. The anthers are so situated that when the beak goes in, they come in contact with the bird's forehead. The same thing happens when the flowerpecker feeds. Dr Salim Ali (1931) noted that where these two species of birds did not exist, or were obstructed from reaching a Loranthus clump, that plant would not survive!

The primary relationship of the flowerpecker with the Loranthus is one of seed dispersal - and how this is done is ofcourse, well known.

Reference:

Ali, Salim (1931):- The role of sunbirds and flowerpeckers un the propagation and distribution of the tree parasite Loranthus longiflorus Desr., in the Konkan (W India) - JBNHS - 35/144.

GLEANINGS:-

1. From the bulletin of The Cleveland Audubon Society comes a note about how sleeping ducks protect themselves from danger. British biologist Dennis Lendrem, in an article in "New Scientist" says 'ducks that seemed to be asleep peeked about 10 times per minute when no immediate danger threatened them. If a cat approached, the peeking rate went to 35 per minute, at which point the ducks were ready to flee. -- Birdwatcher's Digest - Jan/Feb 1984.

2. Wildlife officials in Pakistan have announced that hunting pressures on Siberian and other migratory cranes have been reduced to 1/3 of the previous level. This news gives hope to the tiny flock of 37 Siberian Cranes migrating across 9,000 kms of treacherous skies on the way to their annual wintering grounds in India. The magnitude of live-catching of Demoiselle and Common Cranes and occasional snaring of Siberian Cranes, in the NW Frontier Provicee (NWFP) and the Zhob Dist of Baluchistan were first brought to light by WWF-Pakistan during the spring of 1983. -- WWF News - Nov/Dec 1984 (No 32)

SOCIETY NEWS:-

1. The Pied Crested Cuckoo, which was sighted in Hyderabad on 28 May 1984, heralded the S W Monsoon with first good rains on 15 June 1984. The rains continued intermittently throughout July-September, sometimes heavy and sometimes weak. Tanks and ponds were full and bird life was again noticeable everywhere. Most of the summer-nesters were seen rearing their young on the abundance of insect life while the early monsoon nesters were busy with their nest-building or incubation. It was under these conditions that the Society members went on their regular monthly field-trips.

2. A fairly cool and sunny morning saw a fair number of members on the way to Golconda Fort area. The habitat around Golconda is mostly rocky scrub and grassland. Nearby there is a huge Baobab tree (with a trunk-circumference of 19 birdwatchers holding hands, or 90 feet!) surrounded by fields, derelict buildings and embankments of a one-time lake. We were rewarded with the sight of several grassland and scrubland birds like the grey partridge, rain quail, little brown, red-turtle and spotted doves, roseringed and blossomheaded parakeets, redvented bulbul, redrumped swallow and palm swifts, large grey and whiteheaded babbler, tailor bird, indian robin, redwattled lapwing, iora, dusky crag martin, scavenger vulture and shikra. A nest of an ashy wren-warbler was found in a small bush on the slope of an embankment. Most interesting sightings were those of the blackheaded cuckoo shirke and the streaked fantail warbler. After a strenuous morning we sat down for snacks and tea in the garden with the erstwhile 'kings' and 'queens' for company and dispersed after comparing notes and a lot of leg pulling.

3. Our monthly field-trip on 19th August to Chilkur, began from Kothi a little late. As is usual these days, it was a fairly good crowd. Chilkur is a deer park about 18 kms from the city. It is a dense and fairly extensive rocky-scrub habitat. A small stream flows across and there is a lake nearby. As is to be expected in such places, the bird-life was typical of the habitat. Some of the more interesting sightings here were the pied crested cuckoo, franklin's wren warbler, streaked fantail warbler, blackwinged kite, blackheaded, whitethroated and red munias, franklin's nightjar and a flock of common sandgrouse flying overhead. During our walk along the nature trails in the park, some of the other birds seen were large grey, whiteheaded and yelllw-eyed babblers; painted partridges could be heard calling all over and a covey of rain quails was flushed at two places. The next months' programme was finalised over a hot cup of tea in the forest department's 'Hut' and then we dispersed for the day.

4. At 8 O'clock on the morning of 2nd September, about

20 of our members were in front of the entrance to the Lion Safari Park in the Nehru Zoological Park, ready to begin our birdwatching field-trip. The lions are normally let out of their cages into the enclosure at 9.30 a.m. So we could be safe for the next 1½ hours. Considering the excellent vegetation and the wooded area of the safari and the zoo, we did not sight many birds. It was partly owing to a sharp drizzle and partly because of the flippant mood of the group. The day ended with 42 species. Notable among these were the common hawk cuckoo, tickell's flowerpecker, common indian nightjar, little minivet and the small greenbilled malkoha. One immature Indian moorhen and two immature bronze-winged jacanas were sighted. A bonus was the brown shrike. During this trip we found, (or rather they found us) two new members - Mr and Mrs D L N Rau. Mr Rau is also a very keen photographer.

5. There were 2 indoor meetings in this quarter. These were held at the forest office, saifabad on 9/7 and 6/8. On the 9th, the members met and discussed various programmes especially the habitat survey project of the BSAP. This was followed by a slide show.

One of our members, B C Choudhury, an expert on crocodiles, gave an illustrated talk on "Crocodiles of India". He had an extremely good and interesting collection of slides. Even those of us who did not know much about crocodiles and their ecology and the efforts being taken to preserve them, went home with the thought that at least now they knew something. I wish Doordarshan, World Wildlife Fund, Bombay Natural History Society and the forest departments of various states would acquire this set along with a taped commentary. It will be an asset worth acquiring as well as an encouragement to the man who has done all the excellent work. On behalf of the members, I can only say - Thank You B C!

HAPPY BIRDWATCHING!!

" The rediscovery of a nocturnal seabird species after 129 years occurred in early May, when Dick Watling had a MacGillivray's Petrel crash recklessly into his head. Watling had been standing in a Fijian forest trying to lure the bird into sight. An ornithologist at the British Museum of Natural Histrry speculated that the bird nose-dived into Mr Watling because he had been standing on its nesthole. "

-- The Economist, May 19, 1984.

COMMENT:-

" In Mayura 1:4 (p. 10) there is a note by Rajeev Mathew wherein he mentions about his observations of Little Egrets Egretta garzetta fishing while flying above the lake surface. It is true that this is not the normal manner of feeding for these birds. A similar behaviour has been recorded earlier elsewhere also. Humayun Abdulali writes about having observed Little Egrets circling above the lake and every now and then jabbing their beaks into the water while in flight and coming up with a fish (JBNHS;64/3/557). This observation was made by Mr Abdulali at Powai Lake, Salsette, near Bombay on 4/6/1967 and again in 11/6/1967.

While Rajeev's observations are interesting, it will be of a greater interest if an explanation could be found for such a change in the manner of feeding. My own hypothesis is that old species have an inbuilt trait for adaptation to surroundings, habitats and changes in the environment. All those species which can conveniently and reasonably quickly adapt themselves to the changes have a better chance of survival than those which cannot or are very slow in adapting.,"

6-3-249/3 - Siraj A Taher.
Road No 1
Banjara Hills
Hyderabad-500 034

EDITOR'S NOTE:- With reference to the above letter, we would like to quote from The Herons Handbook (1984) by Hancock & Kushlan - on "Aerial Foraging".

"While HOVERING, the heron flies in place over the water, stabbing at prey below. In a variant called HOVERING STIRRING the heron pats, stirs or rakes with its feet while hovering. While DIPPING, a heron flies along, periodically reaching into the water to pick up prey. A heron may also trail its toes in the water while flying along, a behaviour called FOOT DRAGGING. While in the air, a heron may catch a flying prey item; this is called AERIAL FLYCATCHING. Or it may dive into the water from the air - either head first by PLUNGING, or feet first by FEET FIRST DIVING....."

BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

The Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh was founded in 1980 with the object of spreading the message of bird conservation. Services to members include fortnightly field-trips, slide and film shows, discussions and talks; MAYURA, the quarterly newsletter, ID cards, field tick-lists and badges. Membership of the Society is open to persons of either sex & of any nationality, scientific societies, institutions, clubs & companies. Corporate Membership is available for persons in their official capacity. For membership and contributing articles to MAYURA, and advertisements, contact the Hon. Secretary, Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, 6-3-249/3, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

—: o :—

Membership Fee :

Ordinary	.....	Rs. 25/- p. a.
Life	.....	Rs. 300/-
Students	... ...	Rs. 15/- p.a.
Corporate	.....	Rs. 100/- p.a.

For Advertisement Tarrif :

Contact Hony. Secretary

OFFICE BEARERS

Pushp Kumar	President
S. Ashok Kumar Maj. A.A. Aziz	} Vice Presidents
Siraj A. Taher	Hon. Secretary
T. Deendayal	Hon. Treasurer

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

a) To inculcate in the people, especially the youth, a spirit of adventure, a love & appreciation of the beauties of nature, especially the avifauna.

b) To impress upon the people the role of avifauna in life on earth & the urgent need for their protection and conservation.

c) To inculcate in the people a sense of responsibility towards maintaining the environment in a good state & the protection of the other inhabitants of this earth & particularly the avifauna.

d) To work for the protection & conservation of bird sanctuaries, parks & habitats generally all over India & particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

e) To promote amongst the people, the knowledge of ornithology in all its branches including particularly the study of bird life of the Oriental Regions, particulary India & the adjoining zeogeographical regions; both alive & otherwise.

f) To carry out research in all branches of ornithology and to assist with information & advice as well as financially where possible, other institutions & individuals in similar pursuits.

g) To provide, equip, maintain & replenish a museum & other repositories for birds, both living or dead, which are suitable & necessary for the study of birds.

h) To do all or any of the above mentioned acts solely or with another or others, for joint management or collaboration or affiliation or any other arrangements with societies or persons having similar or allied objects which may further or benefit the objects of this society.

—: o :—

Front Cover :

INDIAN COURSER (*Cursorius coromadnelicus*). A sandy brown cursorial bird lacking the double breast bands of the extremely rare Jerdon's courser. Resident and patchily distributed in appropriate habitats in Andhra Pradesh. Unlike the Jerdon's Courser which was reported only from the Pennar and Godavary valleys of A. P.

Photographs : Courtesy O. C. Edwards.

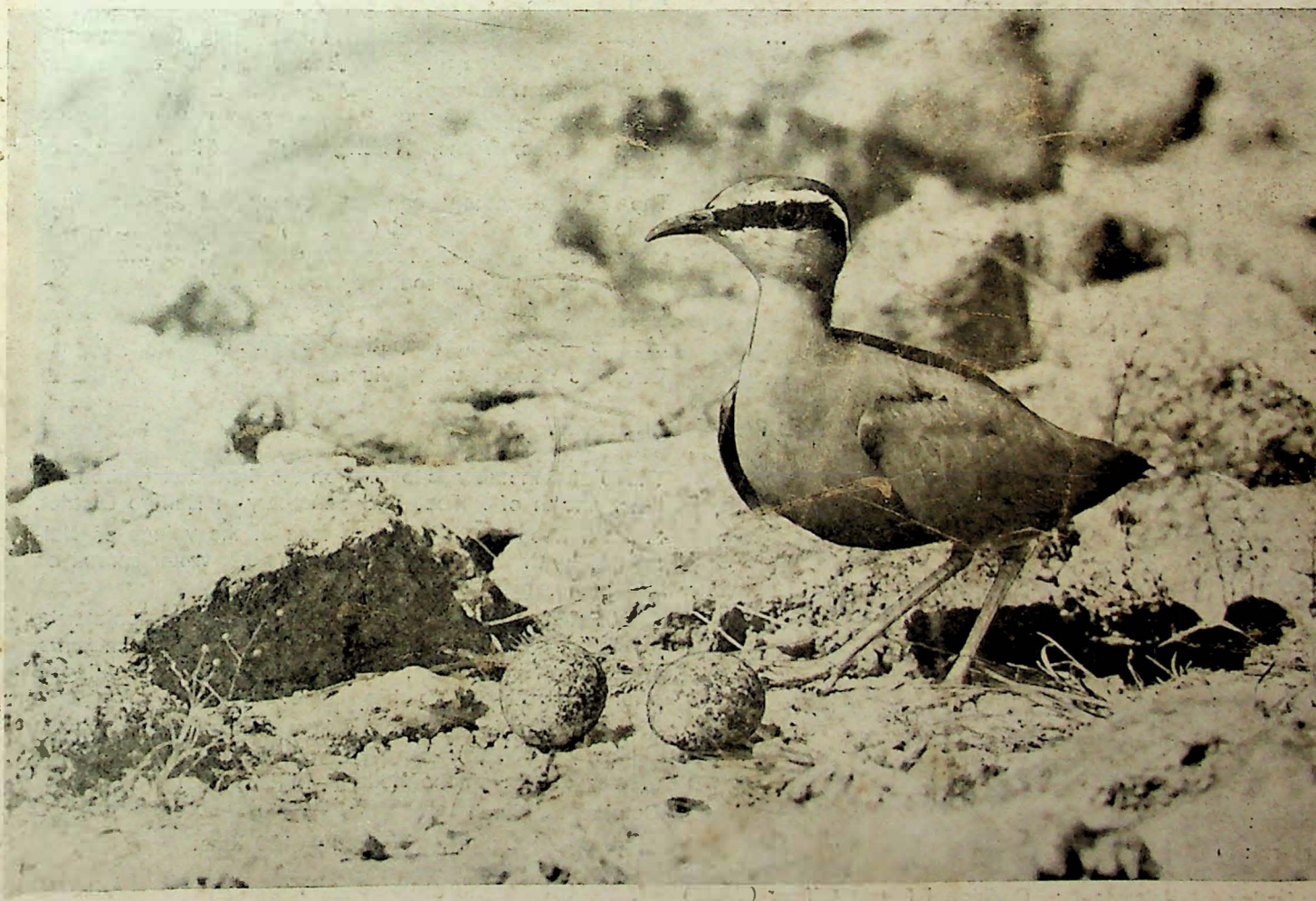
Back Cover

INDIAN KOEL (*Eudynamys scolopacea*). Female (shown in the photo) is dark brown and white barred. The Male is glistening metallic black, with yellowish green bill. Resident & local migratory, it is a very common bird in Andhra Pradesh. Brood parasitic on other birds.

MAYURA

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRD-WATCHERS' SOCIETY OF A.P

Vol. 5 : No. 4



BIRD SANCTUARIES OF ANDHRA PRADESH

KOLLERU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located in West Godavari District.
Area :	673 Sq. Kms. (Depending on the water spread)
Habitat :	It is a marsh with shallow water spread.
Birds Found :	Large number of Garganey Teals, Common Teals, Pochards, Spotbills, Brahminy Ducks, Openbill Storks Herons, occasionally Flamingoes. Grey Pelicans which used to visit this area have become rarer due to various causes.
Season :	October to March.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary can be approached by road from Eluru, the District Headquarters (on N.H. 7) which is just 10 Kms. away. In the Sanctuary area small dinghies or dugouts can be used for approaching birds.
Airport :	Vijayawada — 70 Kms.
Accomodation :	P. W. D. Rest House in Eluru, the District Headquarters.

PULICAT SANCTUARY

Location :	60 Kms. north of Madras City on N. H. 5
Area :	500 Sq. Kms.
Habitat :	A vast coastal shallow brackish lake along the east coast of the Bay of Bengal. The backwaters of the sea attracts a large number of migratory water birds.
Birds Found :	Large congregation of Flamingoes, Grey, Pelicans, Ducks, Teals, Storks, Terns, Herons, Gulls and a number of waders.
Accessibility :	The Bird Sanctuary can be approached by road from Nellore on the G.T. road (NH. 5). The nearest railway station is Sulurpet. Madras City is about 60 Kms. from the Sanctuary to the south by road & rail.
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 60 Kms., Tirupati — 90 Kms.
Accomodation :	Travellers Bungalow at Sulurpet.

NELAPATTU SANCTUARY

Location :	The Bird Sanctuary is located on the East Coast, about 20 Kms. north of Pulicat Bird Sanctuary in Nellore District.
Habitat :	A small fresh water irrigation tank in the village of Nelapattu, with Barringtonia trees in the water spread on which the water birds nest.
Birds Found :	Grey Pelicans are found nesting on the Barringtonia trees in the tank bed. Other nesting birds include Cormorants, White Ibis, Night Heron, Openbill Storks etc. The villagers offer full protection to these birds.
Accessibility :	The Sanctuary is approachable from the Madras-Vijayawada Highway (NH. 5). Also by rail from Doravarichatram railway station on the Nellore—Madras line. (1 Km.)
Season :	October to March
Airport :	Madras — 100 Kms., Tirupati — 120 Kms.

For further details contact : Divisional Forest Officer (WLM) at the respective District Headquarters

OR

The Chief Wildlife Warden
Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
Saifabad, HYDERABAD-500 004

MAYURA

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

VOL: 5 OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1984 NO: 4.

IN THIS ISSUE : PAGE NO.

* Survey of the birds of Andhra Pradesh - 15 70
--By -Pushp Kumar

* A City within a city 73
-- By -Taqiuddin Ansari

* Kolleru : An Idyllic Environment 75
-By C.Bhaskar

* Lesser Florican (Sypheotides indica) found in Medak district: Andhra Pradesh 77
-By Siraj A.Taher

* Habitat Survey Project (HSP) ofBSAP - A Preliminary Report 80
-By B.C.Choudhury

Miscellaneous notes:

I Teleneelapuram echoes of Migrants 90
-By T.V.P.Sastry

II Birding at National Geophysical Research Institute(NGRI) 91
Hyderabad.
-By D.Sreekanth

III Nesting Adaptibility of Baya Weaverbird. 91
-By B.C.Choudhury

* Society News 92

* Comments - T.V.P.Sastry 93

Editorial Board:
Aasheesh Pittie
B.C.Choudhury
N.Shiva Kumar
Taqiuddin Ansari

Date of Publication: 15 Nov.1985

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

Articles for MAYURA may be sent to the Secretary,BSAP,6-3-249/3 Banjara Hills, Road No.1,Hyderabad -500 034, Andhra Pradesh. or to Aasheesh Pittie,14-7-370,Begum Bazar,Hyderabad - 500 012.(A.P)

27/9/91

Indexed
Biosci/Plantsci
NCBIBLIO

SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - 15

By:- Pushp Kumar, I.F.S.

Continued from Vol.5 No.3 Page 52

RAILS, COOTS: Rallidae

This large groups of partridge sized black, brown and blue coloured water birds; so called because of their long thin bodies and long legs adapted so well to their habitat of marshes, swamps and lakes with reed beds, is well represented in Andhra Pradesh. Due to their crepuscular nature and reed bed habitats, these skulking birds are more often heard than seen and hence many a time over-looked. The Group includes Rails, Crakes, Moorhens and Coots. As marsh, estuary and lake margins are being cleared and occupied by man for cultivation, this group, especially the lake margin dwellers like the Rails and Crakes, face a grave threat.

Of the 17 species and 23 sub-species listed for the Sub-continent, 11 species and sub-species are reported from the State.

INDIAN BLUEBREASTED BANDED RAIL Rallus striatus albiventor (Swainson)

Telugu: Wadikodi Urdu: None recorded (?)

Resident. Moving about locally according to water conditions in marshes and lake margins. Reported on the east coast uptil now from Chingleput, Tamil Nadu. However, two live specimens caught near the marshes west of the Visakhapatnam Airport and now housed in the Eastern Ghats aviary in Vizag Zoo. In the hitherto unreported Deccan peninsula, one specimen caught near Hussain Sagar (Hyderabad) in December 1979. Also observed on the Nannanur Plateau in the paddy fields and marshes, east of Amrabad. The red head and blue breast unmistakeable. This extends the range of this species to the Deccan Plateau and to Andhra Pradesh.

INDIAN SLATYLEGGED BANDED CRAKE Rallina eurizonoides amauriptera (Jerdon)

Telugu: None recorded (?) Urdu: None recorded (?)

Status of this elusive crake not properly worked out in the State. Hand-book records it as "occurring practically throughout our area". Only one fleeting glimpse of a rail of this description along the reed beds in the Chandravanka river (Ethipothala falls) Nagarjunasagar at almost sunset!

EASTERN BAILLON'S CRAKE Porzana pusillapusilla (Pallas)

Telugu: None recorded (?) Urdu: None recorded (?)

Status not properly determined. Recorded by Salim Ali in his Survey of Hyderabad State as occurring near Nellipaka

in Khammam District. Observed on number of occasions in the Typha reed beds in Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad behind the maidan. Perhaps much more common, but overlooked.

SPOTTED CRAKE Porzana porzana (Linnaeus)

Telugu: Vadikodi Urdu: None recorded (?)

Migrant. Little is known about this bird and its occurrence in Andhra Pradesh. Hand-book lists it as occurring practically throughout; atleast upto Belgaum.

SOUTHERN RUDDY CRAKE Porzana fusca zeylonica (Baker)

Telugu: None recorded (?) Urdu: None recorded (?)

Resident. Observed since 1962 from one locality only i.e. in and around Hyderabad. Quite common in the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad in the reed beds in the sanctuary area and other ponds in winter as well as summer. Also in the small tank in Chandrayangutta area. One specimen also collected and a number photographed. Measurements of collected specimen indicates this to be the southern race. This small alert crake has not been reported before from peninsular India. The Handbook also records it as occurring in the Indo-Gangetic plain and again in the western ghat area from Belgaum, southwards. This extends the range of this species now to Andhra Pradesh and Peninsular India.

BROWN CRAKE Amaurornis akool akool (Sykes)

Telugu: Wadi Kodi (?) Urdu: None recorded (?)

Resident. Observed regularly since 1962 in the Typha reed beds both in sanctuary areas as well as outside in the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad. Also observed in the reed beds along the Chandravanka river below the Ethipothala falls near Nagarjunasagar. Pairs making forays along the edge of the reeds to snatch a tit-bits midstream in the numerous rivulets. Perhaps more common but overlooked. This extends the range to the Deccan Peninsula and to Andhra Pradesh.

INDIAN WHITEBREASTED WATERHEN Amaurornis phoenicurus phoenicurus (Pennant)

Telugu: Buta Kodi Urdu: Dhank

Resident. Fairly common throughout the state in marshes, lake margins, ponds, etc. Conspicuous during the breeding season (rains) with its loud calls. A pair used to nest regularly in the same pond for 5 years in Nehru Zoological Park. The all black young were adept at climbing a date palm in the margin, at the slightest sign of alarm.

KORA OR WATERCOCK Gallicerex cinerea (Gmelin)

Telugu: Neeti Kodi (?) Urdu: Kora

Status not known in the State. Frequent along tanks and reedy reservoirs. Observed at Kondakorla in Vizag Dist. Perhaps commoner elsewhere.

INDIAN MOORHEN Gallinula chloropus indica (Blyth)

Telugu: Tumba kodi, Bollikodi Urdu: Tarvi murghi

Resident. Throughout the state in lakes, tanks, reservoirs with reed beds and in marshes. Large numbers observed in Kondakorla in February 1985, in shallow water with submerged vegetation but very near Typha reed beds in the eastern part. Entire population flies into the reeds on approach of the dugout boats and is lost completely. Large populations also found in the Kolleru reed beds and in many other tanks.

INDIAN PURPLE MOORHEN Porphyrio porphyrio poliocephalus (Latham)

Telugu: Nila Bolli kodi Urdu: Udi pani murghi

Resident. Found commonly throughout the state in lakes, tanks and reservoirs with reed beds, which they use for construction of their platform like nests. In 1962, four birds released in sanctuary area of Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad (where there were none) resulted in a population of over 300 birds in the next 3 years! This was due mainly to ingress of birds attracted from surrounding areas making the evenings truly memorable with their calls, croaks, and groans! Big population in "Vegetated waters" like Kondakorla in Vizag District, Manjira Barrage, Dindi reservoir, Nandular Tank (Cuddapah District) and above all Kolleru amidst the Typha and the Eichornia.

COOT Fulica atra atra (Linnaeus)

Telugu: Nalla Bolli kodi Urdu: Ari

Resident. Patchily in suitable waters in the state. Adults with grown young observed in Gongur Tank north of and adjoining Manjira Reservoir in November. Large numbers are seen in Kondakarla, Nandalur and Tatipudi tanks. Small numbers on tanks with submerged vegetation in other areas.

A CITY WITHIN A CITY

By:- Taqiuddin Ansari, 10-5-32/3/1 First Lancers, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500 028.

In the daily hum drum of exacting life in cities an individual can be forgiven if he totally fails to notice or at the most is just marginally aware of the existence of a large number of avian hosts in the midst of what he would like to think is the predominant preserve of Homo sapiens.

In fact bird life in a modern metropolis is congregated in such large numbers that it earns for itself the right to have formed a "City" (i.e. an avian city within a human habitation).

The reasons for this large (permanent or temporary) gathering may be varied, like an assured source of food for both carnivorous and graminivorous birds like Raptors, Blue Rock pigeon etc., due to common food habits with humans or the predominance of fruit trees which once again attracts birds like Parakeets, Mynahs etc., or even ready shelters available for nesting, but the end result is only a positive one, (i.e) to a bird lover it gives him an opportunity to be in the midst of what he likes to do most "Bird Watching", even when he cannot tear himself away from his daily rat race. Before I come to behavioural observations of individual species I have made in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad I would like to mention two common features exhibited by birds irrespective of species or size that as I have noticed.

a) Apparent lack of concern for safety or ignoring human proximity-; Except for the wily and over distrustful house crow almost all the birds found in cities like House Sparrows, Blue Rock Pigeon, Koel, Cattle Egret, Dabchicks, Little Cormorants, Pariah Kites, Common Mynahs etc. allow humans to come quite close to them at one time or the other. It is as if they know instinctively that a casual approach of humans in a human settled area is not dangerous to them. These same birds when they are found in the wilds exhibit utmost caution at the approach of humans and are liable to scatter if you deviate even a few feet from the cart track.

b) Awareness of human life style and their successful adaptation to it-; Though various species of birds have become familiar to human ways through long association and derive benefit out of it for themselves by adopting various intelligent methods, two species stand out head and shoulders above them, one is the crow which competes with humans in snatching a morsel and a good number of times comes out the winnor. I have

personally witnessed this crafty bird make a daring landing on a dinner table once and fly away swiftly with a tasty morsel of food to land on a nearby tree and croak triumphantly. More often than not they topple containers placed at a height in order to break them in the hope of getting at the things placed inside, but the most amusing and interesting sights I have seen was a score of crows flying above a M C H garbage truck travelling at approximately 20-30 KMPH. These crows maintained a height of 10 Feet above the refuse piled on top of the open truck and were repeatedly diving one after another to retrieve some bits of food. Their ability and skilled manoeuvrability made it look like a group of bombers attacking an Aircraft Carrier on the high seas.

The other species is the House Sparrow which is virtually a member of the family because one cannot imagine a house however modest in size or structure which is not inhabited by this homely bird. Its chirps are an integral part of your household noises. It shares your food, your water and your space for its nest and because of its apparently high fertility rate you are very likely to find newcomers dislodged from their nests on to the floor at frequent intervals.

Other species which do not directly compete with human beings but are nevertheless found in the city vicinity have also made interesting material for observation and study, I give some of the observations I have made below:

Dabchicks: Invariably found through out the year near the Secunderabad end of Tankbund adjacent to Boats Club, the numbers vary from three to four to a maximum of twenty and once I was surprised to see a solitary visitor wading in accumulated rain water of a very temporary character in the midst of a locality. Just goes to show how adaptable this species is.

Common Mynah: Found abundantly all over the city but some common roosting places known to me are Banyan Trees on both sides of the River Musi, Trees in the Animal Husbandry complex at Shantinagar and the clock tower park in Secunderabad. In these places the birds congregate regularly at dusk and the entire vicinity resembles a unruly assembly session in progress. One interesting bit of watching done by me involved a Mynah trying to recover an indistinguishable object lying in the centre of a footpath beside a busy road, the mynah was on the ground about 5 feet from the object placed near the road. Every time the mynah tried to retrieve the object it spied some cyclist or a pedestrian approaching near and the mynah waddled back to its retreat behind the trunk of a small tree and peered at the intruder till it was safe to come out again, what struck me as surprising was that the entire episode took nearly fifteen minutes and not once did the mynah use its wings.

Large pied wagtail: A solitary visitor on the window sill of my office room, makes a pleasant whistling call as long as it is present and is a welcome change from the routine.

There are other species like small and cattle egrets, Rose ringed parakeets etc. which I will write about in the next article of the personnel observations I have made. When I had written up to this I have noticed a large congregation of water birds right in the centre of Hussain Sagar most probably driven to it by the other lakes going dry. While the numbers are very large, unfortunately due to lack of binoculars during working hours I have not been able to identify the species and I hope some of my other colleagues will make a bid to keep tally of the number of species this summer.

KOLLERU : AN IDYLLIC ENVIRONMENT

By:- C. Bhasker, 10-4-771/9B, Sriramnagar Colony, Humayun Nagar, Hyderabad-500 028.

Tranquil in its quiet beauty is the lake Kolleru. To its natural splendour is the added abundance of the bird and the water plant and the complex assumes a profundity quite different from the other scenic beauties of Andhra Pradesh. It is a 350 square mile lake of fresh water and it shrinks to 135 square miles during the non-rainy season. It is a natural depression formed between the drainage belts of the rivers Godavary and Krishna. Yerrakalva, Tammileru, Budameru and Ramileru commanding a catchment area of over 2000 square miles, drain their waters into the Bay of Bengal through the Upputuru. When flooded the depth of Kolleru averages 10 feet and during other seasons it can be anywhere between 3 and 7 feet.

Eluru, the headquarters of the West Godavary district of Andhra Pradesh is about 7 miles from Sriparru or Madepalli where a long bridge spanning the lake is constructed to shorten the distance to Kaikaluru in Krishna District. Small country boats are available to move about in the lake.

Kolleru has been since times immemorial, a natural sanctuary for birds, especially for the grey pelicans which used to come into the Kolleru area either during the last week of October or the first week of November and stay on until April when they dispersed with their fledglings. They have stopped coming to the lake since 1974. Painted storks and Grey Herons are also found at Kolleru. They are now scared away by the cruel interference of man.

Their eggs and chicks had no protection though they build their nests either on water-insulated tree tops or palm trees. Also their food is being constantly stolen by man. Man has undertaken to fish more and more, trespassing into the preserves of these harmless beautiful birds with the result, the natural settlement of birds is unsettled.

Even now a visit to the lake is educative and rewarding. One can observe varieties of birds in addition to fish and water plants.

There are about 40 varieties of water plants, some with beautiful flowers and a few of them insectivorous. Water Hyacinth, useful as cattle feed and in the making of paper and inks is available in plenty.

Among birds, Bronze-winged Jacanas, Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Cotton Teals, Cormorants, Cattle Egrets, Pond Herons and various other species are found. It is interesting to see near Prathikolu Lanka, River Terns diving to catch fish, Kingfishers, Painted Storks, Night Herons, Moor-hens, Black Herons, Spoonbills, Whitebreasted Water-hens, (locally called the water fowl, smaller than the moorhen without a red crest), Openbilled Storks and Egrets. Their flutter and noise prove to the sensitive visitor that theirs' is a natural sanctuary and the encroachers are having their day.

It is said that the Kolleru area is being developed and hence the deprivation forced on the fauna and flora of their natural habitat. It might take crores of rupees to reclaim the land for food production but the result is doubtful and the reclamation must naturally be a long drawn out process. Meanwhile the beauty patch that this swamp represents for the nature lover will be destroyed permanently. The din of civilisation and development had already taken a heavy toll of nature's bounty and beauty.

Writing on the Belted Kingfishers:

"Like hawks, swallows, and other hunting birds, Kingfishers are equipped with eyes that magnify images. Their eyes are placed well forward in the head, giving them binocular vision, and the retinas also contain droplets of red-coloured oil which help filter out glares from the water's surface".

- George Laycock in
BWD - May/June 1984.

LESSER FLORICAN (Sypheotides indica*) FOUND IN MEDAK DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

By: Siraj A. Taher, 6-3-249/3, Road No.1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

On 1st November, 1984, while birdwatching near Patancheru, a village about 35 Kms. north-west of Hyderabad City, I came across a villager carrying a bird. The bird was found to be dead, but the shape, size and plumage markings observed made me quite excited about it's identity. A quick reference to the 'Pictorial Guide to Birds of the Indian subcontinent, (Salim Ali & Dhillon Ripley) which I was carrying confirmed my identification of the dead bird as the female Lesser Florican (Sypheotides indica). I made further enquiries from him as to the place it was found (or killed) and he indicated to me a place about 5-7 Kms. away from Patancheru, named Indresham. I took him to the spot he was supposed to have found the bird. The place was a scattered scrubland with small and short bushes. There were Jawar fields (short to medium height) all around with a few fields sown with tomato, chana etc. A dry 'nullah' ran across the place onto a lake which was now dry. There are two tanks (both dry) and some brick kilns at some distance. I managed to collect the dead bird from him for measurement etc.

Returning home and referring to the Hand Book Vol.2, for details of the birds' plumage etc., careful measurements of the wings and tarsus and taking it's weight confirmed the identification of the bird as the female LESSER FLORICAN (Sypheotides indica). The dead bird was dissected and skin preserved with arsenic and boric acid. The gizzard on examination consisted of a still undigested grass-hopper broken into 3 or 4 pieces, several big and small beetles, parts of a small crab, semi-digested parts of another grass-hopper and vegetative fibrous matter. All this food has been preserved after taking their collective as well as individual weights. The crop was found empty. (see table).

Indresham village is on the Patancheru-Narsapur road, about 5-7 Kms. from the main highway to Bombay (N.H.9) and located approximately 17°30' N. 78°15' E in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

Subsequent visits to the place have not resulted in any more sightings of Lesser Florican around the place and neither the goatherds nor the villagers seem to have seen similar birds or the more conspicuous male.

An interesting point to be noted here is that the Lesser Florican has not been found or reported from Andhra Pradesh from a very very long time (nearly 85 years), even though unconfirmed reports of it's sighting in the State have come from time to time. The only confirmed report of it

being found in an area which is now in Andhra Pradesh, which I have come across is by Stephen Cox in his note, 'Game in Waltair District', JBNHS-12:574/5 in 1899 and subsequently in the book 'Game Birds of India' (1921) Vol:2, p.203 by Stuart Baker, The Hand book, Vol.2, also does not specifically mention Andhra Pradesh in the distribution eventhough it does say"-------Rajasthan, Gujarat (including Saurashtra and Kutch), south through the peninsula to Mysore and Madras-------'(p.196).

In view of this, I feel that finding the Lesser Florican specimen at a place fairly interior of the State is quite significant. Moreover, seeing it in November indicates that it may be resident in suitable habitats in the State. It's breeding season as given in the handbook, Vol.2, p.197 is 'chiefly July to September' and if it was a Local Migrant in these parts and habitats, it should have left by November, unless of course it was a straggler.

The find has since been reported to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department and the Skin has also been handed over to them. I am given to understand that the Wildlife Division of the State Forest Department is taking steps to survey the area and is also making enquiries locally to try and locate any more birds that may be present at Injeshan or nearby.

A. Plumage description and markings of the bird found:

Beak: Blackish above, flesh coloured below.
Head: Black with a brown line passing through the middle.
Neck: Dusty brown. Two parallel black stripes running from the throat almost upto the upper breast. Blackish markings on the upper neck.
Breast and belly: Upper breast dusky brown with a few black feathers but lower breast and belly - dirty white.
Wings: Upper---Brown with thick black markings and inverted '^' shaped markings.
Back & Tail: Brown and black. The black was more pronounced. The flesh coloured markings resembled an inverted '^'. Tail also similarly coloured.
Down feathers: Generally dirty white but near the skin they were pinkish coloured.

B. Measurements:

Bill: (From feathers) - 33 mm.
Wing: 1st Primary -- 227 mm.
2nd Primary -- 235 mm.
3rd Primary -- 237 mm.
4th Primary -- 237 mm.
5th Primary --230 mm.

Tarsus: 116 mm.
Tail: 113 mm.

Weight: 640 gms.

C. Gizzard:

Weight of the gizzard with contents: 35.38 gms.
Weight of contents only: . . 25.12 gms.

D. Gizzard content analysis:

Grasshopper (Shorthorned) ..	1.81 gms.	7.245%
and Locust	7.83 gms.	31.17%
Crab parts	0.745gms.	2.96%
Dung Beetle	0.652 gms	2.59%
Beetles (Fam: Carabids)	0.31 gms.	1.23%
Large Rock Beetle: (Fam: Coccinillid)	0.270 gms.	1.07%
Beetle (one) (Fam: Curculinoid)	0.05 gms.	0.199%
Beetle (parts) (Fam: Pentatenids)	0.03 gms.	0.110%
Weevils	0.022 gms.	0.087%
Digested or semi-digested food and fibrous matter	13.37 gms.	53.22%
Total	25.109 gms.	99.955%

Acknowledgement:

I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Pushp Kumar, our President for his guidance and help in the identification of the bird. I am also thankful to Rajeev Mathew, a fellow bird-watcher for his help in getting the gizzard contents weighed, identified, and analysed. My grateful thanks are also due to the Wildlife Wing of the A.P Forest Department for their help in survey of the area near Patancheru.

References:

1. Cox, Stephen (1899) -- Game in the Waltair District, JBNHS-12/574.
2. Baker, E.C.S. (1921) -- GAME BIRDS OF INDIA, Vol.2, B.N.H.S., Bombay.
3. Ali, S. & Ripley, S.D. (1980) - HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA & PAKISTAN (2nd Edn.), O.U.P.
4. ----------(1983) - A PICTORIAL GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT - O.U.P.

Mr.N. Prabhakara Chari, a post graduate in Zoology of Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati has recently joined the Osmania University to continue in a new research project on Grey Pelican (Pelecanus philippensis) at Neelapattu. Several aspects studied by Dr.Nagulu and some new aspects on biology and ecology of this bird are proposed to be covered by Mr. Chari during his study period.

Before joining this project Mr.Chari was studying bird species like Rose-ringed Parakeet (Psittacula krameri), Grey Partridge (Francolinus pondicereanus), Pied Kingfisher (Ceryle rudis) and Redvented Bulbul (Pycnonotus cafer) at Tirupati.

Any information available with the members of the BSP on Pelicans can be conveyed to Mr.Chari, C/o Dr.J.V.Ramana Rao, Dept. of Zoology, Osmania University, Hyderabad-500007.

HABITAT SURVEY PROJECT (HSP) OF BSAP - A PRELIMINARY REPORT.

By B.C.CHOUDHURY (HSP Co-ordinator).

In MAYURA Vol.4 No.4 (Oct -Dec 1983) the readers were informed of a Habitat Survey Project (HSP) initiated by the Birdwatcher Society of Andhra Pradesh. Nine different habtats in and around Hyderabad city were selected and members volunteered to carry out a survey of these areas to record the 'present state of affairs' of these habitats in terms of biotic and abiotic factors. In doing so the BSAP planned to prepare an inventry of the habitats so that any future change in the habitat can be evaluated and an attempt be made to stop any activity that can be stopped.

Migration of volunteers during the period (July '83 to June'8 hampered the survey of some selected habitats. However, with new members volunteering the work could be completed. The report that follows contain abstracted reports by the volunteers of each habitat survey group - edited to some extent by the co-ordinator to fit in within the limited space MAYURA provides.

One can find in all the habitat types surveyd an increasing pressure by human agency. In some locations out of necessity but in most cases out of sheer disrespect to the laws of nature and ignorance and negligence. During the course of survey the BSAP members have brought to the notice of the concerned authorities some of these ' disturbing feat ures' and also to the notice of general public through newspaper reports.

As off-shoots of the HSP, several volunteering members have started making detail notes on such observations as ; nesting birds and nests, parental care, migration dates, flowering trees and their relation to birds etc. and these are reported in MAYURA in brief as Miscelaneous Notes.

ABSTRACTED REPORTS ON VARIOUS SURVEYED HABITATS.

1. MARSH LANDS . (Filed by P.Balakoteswar Rao).

I have been observing a small marsh near Mehdipatnam for the last one year. Sometime around the winter of early 1984 it was drained out. This seems to be the case with most of the marshes in the twin cities. Consequently,I kept a watch on patches of marshes whereever I could find one. But, with increasing construction activities around the first to suffer seemed to be the marshlands.

The marsh I observed for the longest period (fortunately, this one did not suffer the fate of other marshes) was one of 100 mts. X 50 mts dimension, with grass of about 10 inch in height.Most of the common birds found here were in association with cattle. The insect population was very good.

Initially, I missed a lot of birds. But as my observation progressed I could make a list. The birds observed were directly using the marsh,either for feeding,drinking or taking a bath. During the summer months of April and May this marsh slowly started drying and the Egrets roosting nearby suddenly vanished - I could not know Where !

My list of birds observed in the marsh included these ones:

Little Egret,Cattle Egret,Pond Heron,Common and Brahminy Mynah,Redrumped Swallow,Palm Swift,House Swift,Spotted Munia, Whitethroated Munia,Small Blue Kingfisher,Whitebreasted Kingfisher,Blue Rock Thrush,Little Brown Dove,Spotted Dove, Large Pied and Grey Wagtail.

At the end of one year I ralised the marshes are going before my finding them. If this is the way the marshes going to be drained there will be bad time for the birds for they have to disperse far and wide. It is sad to see this happening, but I wonder if this can be stopped.

2.GRASS LAND (Filed by Aasheesh Pittie)

Mahavir Harina Vanasthali is a deer park,14kms from the city of Hyderabad. It spreads over 200 acres of undulating boulder-strewn,red-soil country of grass and dry scrubs,which was once the private hunting ground of the Nizam.Named the "Shikargah" and comprising areas of Saroornagar,Hayatnagar, etc.,this area held good populations of Black Buck and Cheetal till as recently as 1940. With royal protection withdrawn after independence, this area was slowly encroached upon;its wildlife decimated and the vegetation grazed to the ground by domestic cattle.

As various organisations approached the government for land in these areas, it was decided to earmark at least 200 acres (to begin with) for a deer park along the highway. A survey by the officers of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department in 1975 revealed a couple of remnant Blackbuck in the proposed park area. A chainlink fence was erected around the area in November 1975 to protect vegetation from grazing cattle and around the area and tresspassers. This followed reintroduction of some more Blackbucks,Cheetal and Chinkara.**

Today,the difference in vegetation within and outside the enclosed area is remarkable. Outside,the land is completely denuded. Inside,the dry deciduous flora thrives. Various species of stunted trees and dry grasses grow here,Commoner among them are :
Acacia leucophloea;A.sundanna ;A.arabica;Butea monosperma; Cassia fistula;Bauhinia racemosa;Dichrostachys cinerea; Zizyphus xylopyra;Z.oenoplia;Calastrus senegalensis.

Water is made available in artificial pools by borewells, and a couple of natural wells. Bird fauna is fairly abundant mainly comprising of seed and insect eating birds; and some raptors.

** With protection the locally available wildboar population within the park has increased and the population of the Blackbuck and cheetal stands at over a hundred. With the municipal dumpyard behind the Harin Vanasthali it is easy to spot a few hundred vultures hovering over the park anyday .-Editors.

3. FARMLAND, AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, HYDERABAD.
(Filed by Srinivas S.Rao)

Agricultural College Farmlands in Rajendranagar, spread over an area of 400 acres is situated 14 Kms south of Hyderabad city. The undulated area is charecterised by a grassland type of vegetation - mainly dominated by two species of grass; Cymbopogon sp's and Spear grass.

Experimental crop plots raised for carrying out research work are situated within this stretch amongst the weeds, shrubs and many trees. The weather usually is warm with temperatures ranging between 32 to 35° C except in summer, when the mercury touches 42° C.

There are two ponds inside the campus; one near the National Academy for Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) and the other in the college farm. The pond in the college farm is characterised by the presence of two aquatic weeds; Ottelia alismoides and Hydrilla verticellata in large numbers. Asteracantha longifolia is seen in small patches around the pond. The diverse weed flora in the campus includes the following:
Datura stranonium; Alternanthera echinata; Gomphrena celusoides; Tridax procumbens; Euphorbia hirta; Achyranthes aspera; Sida sp; Tephrosia purpurea; Parthenium hysterophorus; Oldenlandia umbellata; Calotropis gigantea; Cynodon dactylon; Cyperus rotundus; Gynandropsis pentaphylla; Cloene viscosa; Lantana camara: Xanthium strumarium; Physalis minima; Amaranthus viridis; Celosia argenttea; Digera arvensis; Heliotropium indicum; Acanthospermum hispidium; Legasca nollis; Ageratum conyzoides: Solanum xantho-carpum; Cirsium arvense; Croton sparsiflorus; Tribulus terrestris; Heliotropium zeylanicum; Argemone mexicana etc.

The introduced shrubs are Bouganvillea, Nerium odorum (Oleander) Ixora; Tecoma stans; Hibiscus rosasinensis; Acalypha etc.

Among the treed the following needs mention: Azadiracta indica; Melanthus excelsa; Acacia nilotica; A. auriculiformis; Erythrina indica; Bauhinia purpurea; Delonix regia; Spathodea campanulata; Peltophorum; Lagerstromea speciosa; Caryota eurense; Glyricidia; Cassia fistula; Eugenia jambolina; Leucaena leucocephala; Mangifera indica; Dalbergia sisoo; Casurina equisetifolia; and many species of Eucalyptus.

The farmland area is rich with insect life. Grasshoppers of several species including the surface grasshopper, Chrotogonus oxypterus, the cotton grasshopper, Cyrtacanthacris ranacea, the Ak grasshopper, Poecilocceros pictus etc. dominate the grassland. Carabid bettles (ground beetle) predaceous on several harmful insect species, Crickets, Tettigonids, Weevils, Jewel Beetles etc., are also found in large numbers.

Though I am not adapt in identifying the many varieties of butterflies one can come across the commonest ones, the Monarch butterfly, Danais chrysippus, the Nerium butterfly, Euploea core, the Citrus butterfly, Papilio demoleus and several other species in very large numbers.

To speak of birds, the campus hosts a large number of both resident and migratory variety. Since the campus is a place where grains are produced a large number of grain and seed eating birds are seen. During winter quite a few raptors are also seen.

Some of the resident birds are:

1.Cattle Egret,2.Pond Heron,3.Short toed Eagle,4.Pariah Kite, 5.Black-winged Kite,6.Common Quail,7.Red-wattled Lapwing, 8.Spotted Dove,9.Blue Rock Pigeon,10.Blossom headed Parakeet, 11.Rose-ringed Parakeet,12.Crow-pheasant,13.Indian Cuckoo, 14.Spotted Owlet,15. House Swift,16.Little Blue Kingfisher, 17.Pied Kingfisher,18.White-breasted Kingfisher,19.Small Green Bee-eater,20.Indian Roller,21.Hoopoe,22.Ashy Crown Finch Lark, 23. Red-winged Bush Lark,24.Common Swallow,25.Golden Oriole, 26.Black Drongo,27.Brahminy Mynah,28.Common Mynah,29.House Crow, 30.Jungle Crow,31.Indian Tree Pie,32.Common Iora,33.Red-vented Bulbul,34.Common Babbler, 35.Jungle Babbler,36.Ashy Wren Warbler, 37.Pied Bush Chat,38.Indian Robin,39.Large Pied Wagtail,40.Baya, 41.Purple Sunbird,42.Purple-rumped Sunbird,43.White-throated Munia,44.Black-headed Munia,45.House Sparrow,46.Dusky Crag Martin, and the migrants are:
1.Stone Chat,2.Red-rumped Swallow,3.Yellow Wagtail,4.Golden backed Woodpecker,5.Red-start,6.Pied-crested Cuckoo,7.Blue Rock Thrush,8.Grey Shrike, 9. Rufous-backed Shrike,10.Fantailed Flycatcher andWhite Wagtail.

Golden Orioles nest and Drongo nests have been observed in the campus. From the abundance of Dusky Crag Martins and House Swifts near the tall Library building , it is felt that they are also nesting. The workers in the college treshing yard complain that grains of paddy and bajra are damaged by House Sparrows.

There is not much of disturbance to the habitat except that gradually more and more areas are brought under experimental cultivation perhaps favouring a particular type of fauna.Of late quite a few species of new trees are introduced. This may bring about some changes but not in the near future.

4. HILLY AND ROCKY AREAS.(FILED by Siraj A.Taher & Humayun Taher).

Study area: Hilly and Rocky areas of Banjara Hills and Jubilee hills.
Period of study: July 1983 to June 1984.

Banjara Hills is an area of rocky undulating lands and large and small hillocks,mainly bare basalt and granite and the soil is hard,gravelly 'murram'. There are three valleys providing natural drainage for the rainwater which collects in 3 lakes, one perennial and two seasonal and marshy.The vegetation on the valle valley slopes is low scrub and wild grasses with a sprinkling of short and stunted trees.

A part of Banjara Hills lying to the north-west., where a sprawling housing colony has come up is now called 'Jubilee Hills'. It used to be a totally uninhabited area with dense scrub forest, bushes and trees.The land is undulating rocky grounds with large and small hillocks. A rain-fed lake exists between the hillocks with a long and wide valley on one side. A small protected area within the walls of 'Cheran Palace' gives an indication of the habitat type that once existed here.

Just thirty years ago,the study area was a serene place,free from the ravages of development.There were few bunglows with large compounds,beautiful gardens and an abundant vegetation. With ponds,marshes and valleys provided a varied type of habitat.

Methedology of survey: A minimum of three visits were made by both of us every month. A visit time comprised of 0630 to 1500hrs. to 1800 hrs. The area was divided into four zones: such as 1. Valleys, 2. Wetland and lakes, 3. Plains and 4. Residential zone. All abiotic factors noted initially were recorded to study their relative intensity as the survey progressed. The fauna, particularly the avifauna were observed using two pairs of binoculars of 7X50 and 8X30 magnification.

The Valleys: Of the three valleys, one culminates at the perennial lake called 'Pathar Ka Talab' (Rocky Lake) with an intervening rainfed lake called ' Singada Talab' (Water Chestnut Lake). The vegetation in the valley is mostly scrub, bushes and grass from July to February after which dries up. There are a few scattered trees. Cultivation once went on at a few spots but has stopped now.

Wetland and Lakes: There are three lakes in the area, one with perennial water and two seasonal. The perennial lake is used by the Andhra Pradesh Fisheries Department for raising fish . The two seasonal lakes are marshy with lot of vegetation. Water level in these two lakes are good from July - February. But goes down very much from March to June. One of these has almost dried up now due to stoppage of 'inflow' and the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad developing this area into a manicured park.

Plains and other area: Few and far between, these flat lands, mostly rocky and covered with grass and short scrub are poor in vegetation but from July to September there are a couple of water-holes formed. Some very beautiful rock fprmations can be seen in these areas.

Residential Zones: Quite a large portion of Banjara Hills is now a built-up area. Large compounds are being turned into houses and vast open areas are giving way to colonies. The biggest such activity is at the Jubilee Hills colony.

Abiotic interferences: The main disturbance in the valleys is from illegal constructions around and the consequential blocking up of the natural rainwater drainage course.

At the 'Pather Ka Talab' the main problem is its use by the nearby 'basti' people for washing clothes and buffaloes. Rubbish and waste disposal into the water and the consequent growth of water hyacinth is the other. Encroachment on the adjoining shores and the blocking up of the natural rainwater inflow is the main disturbance in the other two lakes.

Plains and other areas are the most vulnerable to developmental and construction activities. Road widening and laying of new roads is also a detrimental factor. Indiscriminate slum growth is the other problem in this area.

The residential zones are gradually reducing the open areas and the natural vegetations are being replaced by concrete structures and paved roads.

Insect life is pretty good and the amphibian and reptile population is moderately good due to the rocky nature for concealment.

Avifauna: Kites, Lapwings, Babblers, Wagtails, Bee-eaters, Chats and Robins, Warblers, Mynahs, Shrikes, Cuckoo-shrikes, Cuckoos, Koel, Munia, Roller, Vultures, Crows, Drongos, Bulbuls, Swallows, Swifts and Crag Martins, Spotted Owlets, Hoopoe, Larks, Pippits, Sunbirds, Egrets, Cormorants, Herons, Partridges, Flowerpeckers, Parakeets, Doves, Sparrows, Ibras, Kingfishers, Dabchicks etc. An occasional Indian Pitta and Racket-tailed Drongo have also been noted.

5. OLD CITY OF HYDERABAD (Filed by Md.Ali Khan).

The area on the southern side of Musi river reaching upto Pahadi Shareef limits are known as the old city of Hyderabad. This presently thickly populated and congested locality was once the location of small and well laidout palaces.In the last twenty to thirty years these palaces have given way to ill-planned concrete slums.Added to this , there are hardly any Municipal parks or gardens or even some greenery. Some of the remnant old buildings still retain their old charm in their maintained gardens and they are the only relief to the eyes. Added to this is the heavy traffic congestion, making this area one of the noisiest locality.Narrow lanes, crowded ill-planned houses,overflowing nullahs,garbage dumps etc. are some of the common sights , in this study area.

Inspite of this,the area provides habitat for life forms, which adapt themselves with the living style of humans. Needless to say stray dogs,cats,pigs and cows are a common sight.Even in the concrete slum one can come across such animals as lizards,geckos,rat and cobra snakes,bandicoots, mongoose and striped squirrels.

Some old crumbling diapilated buildings and some of the well maintained public buildings(like the high court and city college) with large trees provide living space for fruit bats and insectivorous bats.

Birds which are common includes: House Sparrow,House Crow, Common and Brahminy Mynah,Indian Robin,Blue Rock Pigeon, Parakeet,Sunbird,Warbler,Bulbul,Flowerpecker,Dove,Cuckoo, Drongo,Tailorbird,Bush Chat,Kingfisher,Pariah Kites etc.

Occasionally one can come across Munias,Orioles,Shikras, Kestrels,Red-starts,Wagtails etc. Some of these birds are breeding permanently in houses which contain some large trees and greenery. Tailor birds,Red-vented Bulbul,Spotted Doves,Munias,Rose-ringed Parakeet,Crimson-breasted Barbet and Sparrows are breeding in a Gulmohar tree since a decade in a municipal park in Moghulpura , inspite of the disturbances.

Even during the survey period, the MCH has taken up some road widening programmes and unfortunately some of the last remaining old trees have fallen victims to their axes.These last vestiges of the bygone era of the old city has to be preserved if we want to live in harmony with nature and its other creations.

---

6. PUBLIC GARDENS (Filed by Rajeev Mathew).

The Public Gardens is situated in the heart of the city near to the Hyderabad Railway Staion. It has an excellent tree cover,some trees as old as a hundred years. A mosaic of ponds and drains amongst the greenery makes it one of the best 'lung space' in Hyderabad.Most of the park area is flat,but, the Chinese garden is some 15 to 20 feet below the general outlay. The garden is laid out as a formal garden but the ponds ,big trees and some of the unworked meadow like ground gives it an informal garden like appearence.

Within the garden, designed in typical Hyderabadi architecture are some buildings like the Jubilee Hall - constructed during the Nizam era as also a small but beautiful mosque. The recent constructions by the state government are different looking and includes the Jawahar Bal Bhavan, the Health Museum and the Archaeological Museum.

In this well wooded garden of indeginous and exotic plants some that can be easily identified are Ficus, Jacaranda, Cassia, Raintree, Ashoka, Jamun, Mango, Soapnut, Gulmohar, Mahagony, Tamarind, Silkcotton, Indian Cork, Karanj, Babool, Bhendi, Casurina and a variety of decorative palms. Some of the trees on the avenues are Bauhinias and small bushes of Gardenia, Acalypha, Hibiscus and Bouganvillea.

The ponds are full of waterlillies, lotous, pistias, reeds and a variety of Hydrilla providing home for many water insects, snails crabs and water birds. Frogs, freshwater turtles and water snakes are common. Fish fauna includes Guppies, Mollies, Gouramy, Murrel, Carps and some catfish. Snakes that can be seen generally are the Chekered keelback, Dhaman, Cobra, Green Whip Snake and Russel's viper. Chameleons, Garden lizards and Skinks are also seen.

Squirrels, Mongoose, hares and both the insectivorous and fruit-eating bats represent the wild mammal fauna of the garden. Birdlife is rich. Some 60 to 65 species are common to see in any season. Birds that nest regularly within the gardens include Woodpeckers, Barbets, Spotted Owlets, Kites, some of the Rails and Coots and commoner birds like the Doves, Warblers, Tailor Birds, Ioras, Bulbuls, Koels etc.

During the survey period (July to June 1984) , I made a total of 23 visits and made the following observations.

July 1983: Cork tree in flower. Water bodies in the ponds are clogged with weeds and several fish are dying. Babool tree also in bloom. Late July cleaning of ponds begin.

August: Tamarind in bloom. No other change.
September : Ponds are clean and the garden is green due to rain.
October : Cork and Babool out of flower.
November : No visit.
December : Water lillies in bloom.
January 84: Mango, Silkcotton, Raintree, Waterlillies in flower.
February ; Less of water lillies.
March and April : No visits.
May: Gulmohar, Cassia, Copperpods, Bouganvillea in bloom. Goldenbacked woodpecker and coppersmith nesting.
June: Birds are still in nest and lotus in bloom,

During the study period there has been not much of disturbance in the habitat, but the movement of visitors inside the garden being unrestricted the fauna are highly disturbed as also the flora.

It seems there is a plan to fillin the Chinese Garden area to the general ground level and to take up some more building construction work. Such constructions are going to reduce the greenery considerably and as far as possible has to be avoided.

7. NEHRU ZOOLOGICAL PARK (Filed by B.C.Choudhury).

Nehru Zoological Park covers 415 acres of undulated wooded area in the south-west Hyderabad. Interspersed with grasslands, groves,meadows,marshes and thorny bushes below the waterspread of Mir Alam tank,the zoo provides an ideal habitat for a varied life form not common in the surrounding areas. The area of the zoo developed in the last 25 years (and still being worked on) from barren open fields provides an excellent example of natures' recreative capabilities. Even giving allowances to extensive human manipulation,the varied habitat type approximates close to nature.

A centrally flowing stream,bunded at several places forms a series of marshes with Typha vegetation which takes up 10% of the area,providing ideal habitat for Egrets,Herons,Ducks and various waders. Fourty percent area have been built up into large dry and open moated enclosures and supports large Babool, Raintree,Spathodea and Albezzia.The wet moats are full of Hydrilla. About 15% of manicured meadows are lined up with live hedges of Chlorodendron,Justecea,Durranta etc. providing home for warblers,tailor birds and many lizards. Twenty percent of area has been left undeveloped (or for future development) and are allowed to climax into its own vegetational type.This area at present supports Acacia,Pithecalobium,Lantana,Azhadirachta and Sandle wood trees. Ten percent of the area has been made into roads,trails and bridal paths lined with avenue trees such as Bauhinia,Delonix,Cassia,Peltophorum,Glyrricidea,Jacaranda and Indian Cork Tree. Only a paltry 5 % area developed into formal gardens supports Canna and other ornamental plants.

Such a variety of micro-habitats supports (other than the animals inside the enclosure) some 20 species of reptiles which includes Pythons,Monitor lizzards and Chameleon,some 100 species of birds and ten species of mammals that include wild Cheetals,Hares, Mongoose,Squirrels and myriad forms of insects.

Spear,Tiger and Lemon grass,Typha,Acacia and Neem, predominates the present vegetation.Parthenium weed is slowly taking over the Lantana as the major weed.

Spotted Dove,White-headed Babbler,Common Mynah,Black Drongo, White-breasted Waterhen,Kingfishers,Warblers,Red-vented Bulbul, Green Bee-eater,Sunbird,Koel,Tailorbird,Iora,Minivet,Treepie and Golden Oriole are the commonest birds in the zoo. Pariah Kite,Shikra,Woodpecker,Hawk Cuckoo etc. are not uncommon.Some of the major migrants are wagtails,Red-start and several species of waders and ducks.

During the last one year (July 1983 to June 1984) the zoo had to increase areas for its inceasing number of captive animals thereby shrinking the wilderness area. But,the management have also added vegetationless rocky areas on its south-western boundaries. Low rainfall during the year has decreased the marshes. Increasing number of visitors and their trampling of the greenery combined with relative dryness have made many areas of the zoo appear vegetationless. With all this pressures operating it remains to be seen how this man-made habitat is changing. No other habitat in Hyderabad provides a living laboratory as the zoo does.

---

8. INDIRA PARK (Compiled by Siraj A.Taher from BSAP fieldnotes).

Indira Park is situated at Domalguda below the Hussainsagar bund in Hyderabad city,in a fairly wooded builtup area,with lawns, gardens,ponds and some spots with natural vegetaions and marshes.

At the entrance is a very small but good marshy pond of Typha reeds.Further inside on one side,there are lawns and gardens and on the other a man-made pond(used for pleasure boatriding) and extensive open grounds. The naturally wooded areas have basically thorny scrubs and bushes and a considerable number of Acacia . A couple of structures like a rest-house,canteen and a few rooms that serve as office etc. can be seen.

Spread here and there are clumps of Bamboo and groves of Pandanus (Keoda) and Datepalm.(Infact,the whole area below the Hussainsagar bund was known as'Keodavan'in the recent past because of the profuse presence of Pandanus).There are also large Banyan,Neem and a few Raintrees here and there.The naturally growing areas of the park are moderately rich in fauna and needs to be monitored in a greater detail.

Since the park is now meant as a place for recreation,it abounds with people most of the time and inspite of the disturbances many forms of life are supported by the wooded areas. Insect life is rich being close to water and greenery. Quite a few species of reptiles can also be seen.**,

Bird life is reasonably good.On any good birdwatching day one could hope to see at least 40 to 50 species. Most of them are woodland and arrboreal birds like the Flycathers and Warblers, but a few of the waterbirds like Herons,Egrets can also be seen.Since the habitat on the park is well defined,it is even possible to some extentto tell the birds found in each area.There is not much change in either the number of birds or species over the year except during the winter months,when one could hope to see a few species of the smaller migratory birds.The datepalm groves are the location where Spotted Owlets breed as also the Woodpecker and Barbet and Mynah. The large trees inside the park serves as the roosting place for many birds.

Both insectivorous and fruit-eating bats can be seen in the park. The mammals are represented by fieldrats,bandicoots,mongoose and Pariah dogs. Occasionally one can come across a hare.

During the survey period the MCH authorities have been systemat. ically clearing the wooded areas to replace them with lawns and gardens.Much of the marshy areas have been reduced by removing the reeds.Trees are being cut and the Pandanus groves burnt.** During this period,the MCH authorities have also been planting a lot of Eucalyptus trees in the cleared areas.

It is necessary to impress the MCH which manages the park to stop not only indiscriminately destroying the marshes and the natural wooded areas but with proper planning and selection of suitable plants to provide yet another haven for the flora and fauna and a true 'lung space' for the citizens of Hyderabad.

** In 1976,the MCH authorities in a plan to remove all Pandanus from the park,complained that these groves are the places for snakes. They sought the advice of Director,Madras Snake Park in clearing the Pandanus and getting rid of the Snakes. They were advised against removal of Pandanus.!-Editors.

---

6. HUSSAINSAGAR LAKE (Compiled from a report by Administrative Staff College of India researchers Rahul Chettri, C.Ravi and Dr.R.Bowender, all members of the Birdwaterss' Society of Andhra Pradesh.).

Spread over an area of 4.7 sq.Km, the sparkling Hussainsagar lake lies amidst the seventh largest metropolis of India - Hyderabad. The bund of this lake links the twin-cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Hussainsagar, was used as a source of fresh drinking water for the residents of the City in the early 1920's. But, now the lake is as good as dead as the water in it is no more potable for drinking due to the accumulation of effluent from over 150 industries , located all along the catchment area.

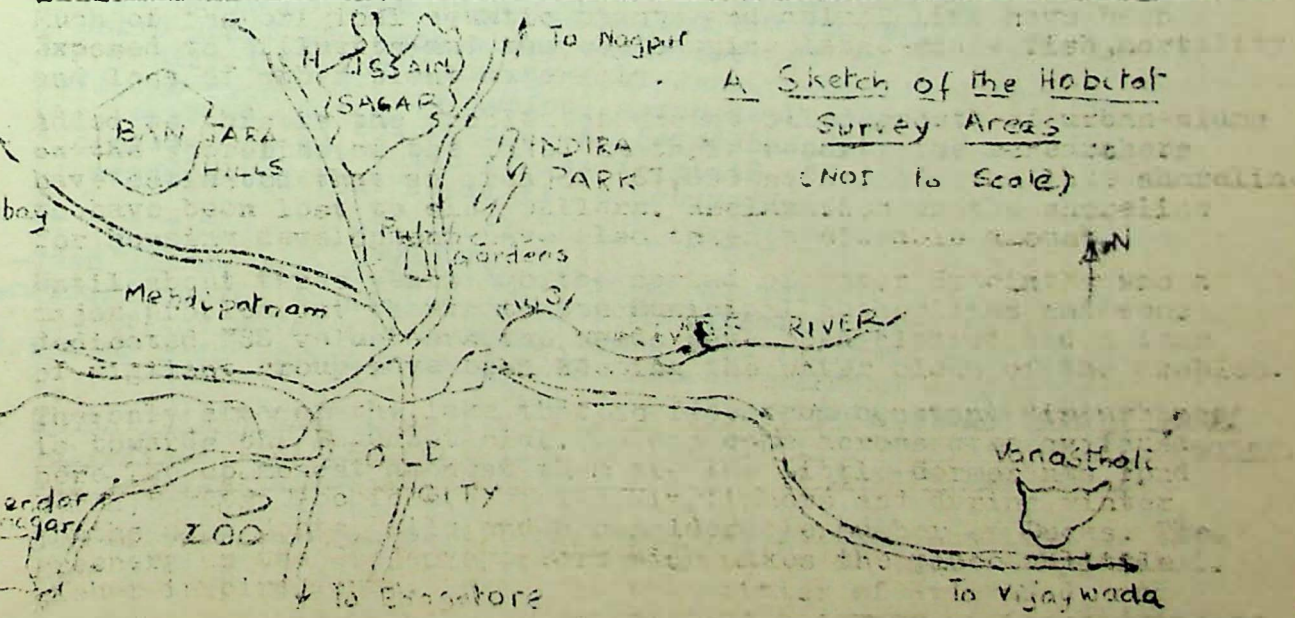
It is estimated that the lake depth was 50+ feet about a decade ago. But constant silting has reduced the depth to about 40+ feet. Much of the original aquatic plants and animal life have been exposed to effluents and thereby causing large-scale fish mortality and loss of other plant materials.

Added to this is the problem of uncontrolled growth of urban-slums on the shoreline of the lake. In their report, the researchers have estimated that an area of 67,000 sq.mt. of the lake shoreline to have been lost to slumdwellers. Reclamation on the shoreline for housing development have also taken a sizeable amount,

Until about three years ago, the spread of water Hyacinths was a major problem, but thanks to the Municipal authorities and some dedicated NSS volunteers, the weeds have been cleared and a team of vigilant group have been keeping the water clean of the problem.

The only area of the lake that is free from constant disturbance is towards the Begumpet side. One can come across some avifauna here. The commonest amongst them are the Little Cormorants, Pond Heron, Egrets, Dabchicks, Wagtails, Kingfishers and during winter months some Coots, Rails and a considerable number of Ducks. The greenery on the Sanjeevaya Park side makes the place a little richer in bird fauna.

The MCH authorities are planning to develop the lake surroundings with more recreational construction and even have plans to develop a bird sanctuary. The Freshwater Biological Station of the Zoological Survey of India who monitor the lake water of its pollution level are of the opinion that the lake is gradually becoming unfit for all kinds of aquatic life. With this canvass can we paint a planned picture of a sylvan lake with swimming ducks in water !



A Sketch of the Habitat Survey Areas (NOT to Scale)

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

I. Teleneelapuram echoes with boats

By:-T.V.P.Sastry, Officer, State Bank of India,
Ichapuram-532 312.

The breeding season at Teleneelapuram has begun with the arrival of 50/60 Grey Pelicans, Pelecanus philippensis on 24th September 1984, in the morning hours around 7.00 a.m. They settled on 4 of the 12 Tamarind trees that are being used by the birds for nesting. Another batch of say 40/50 are expected to join the present stock shortly, if the number has to reach to that of 1983 season.

The painted Storks, Mycteria leucocephala have not yet arrived in large numbers. A few birds were seen on one or two trees on the evening of 30th September 1984. However, a flock consisting of 28 Painted Storks together with 9 Openbill Storks, Anastomus oscitans were noticed at the mudflats of Chelagapeta near Naupada, which is 5 km. from Teleneelapuram village, at 3.30 p.m. on the same day.

I visited Teleneelapuram after completion of the last breeding season on 9th September to checkup whether there are any early arrivals, though they are generally expected in the 4th week of September or if late, during 1st week of October. But there were none. After having received information from a resident of the village on 29th, I proceeded to the Village on 30th September. Most of the pelicans, settled on the top of the trees, are in the groups of four to six. The underhung of the lower mandible for most of the pelicans is capacious. It is yet to be confirmed whether this has any connection with breeding or any sign for concupiscence (sexual appetite!). In the case of Painted Storks the breeding plumage is clear with a pinkish head.

Having come to know that Little Cormorants breed at a village called Godalam which is 15 km. from Teleneelapuram. By the time I reached the village, the sun was about to sink and the following birds were observed to roost on one of the two trees the second one being dried up. 1) Little Cormorant in large numbers, 2) Little Egret, 3) Indian Reef Heron (colouration and more details are sought by the Editors), 4) Grey Heron one on tree and two in flight, 5) Intermediate Egret and 6) Cattle Egrets on the neighbouring small trees in large numbers.

- -

MAYURA, Vol.5(3):4-8

**Readers may refer to an article by Mr.Sastry on the nesting of Grey Pelicans and Painted Storks at Teleneelapuram. In this article, Mr.Sastry observed the birds for a complete nesting season. The present information is based on 1984 nesting season. - Eds.

II. Birding at National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), Hyderabad.

By:- D. Sreekanth, 16-2-768/4/6, Malakpet, Hyderabad-500036.

I had been to NGRI on the cool and cloudy morning of 11th October 1984. It is a thick grassland (on the Secunderabad-Vanrngal Highway about 15 Km north-east of Hyderabad) with plenty of snanke holes (termite/ant hills perhaps - Eds), grasshoppers & lizards, thus attracting many raptors. Apart from raptors which are commonly seen, I have seen a male Pale Harrier, a crested Honey Bussard and some other interesting birds including Small Greenbilled Malkoha, Streaked Fantail Warbler, White browed Fantail Flycatcher, Rufous Woodpecker, Singing Bushlark, Jungle Babbler and a confusing bird completely like flowerpeckers - Ashygrey above and pale (yellowish) buff below with a conspicuous yellow thick beak. A cluster of weaverbird nests were half built and abandoned. After that, I came across an unusual flock of drongos. I crept slowly to the trees on which they were perching and my count was 21. Three of them were young and all were making a lot of noise. They let me approach much nearer and then flew to another place. I was surprised of their persistence (or is it resistance) to human presence, more than that usually found.

III. Nesting adaptibility of Baya Weaver Bird (Ploceus philippinus)

By: B.C.Choudhury, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad-500264.

Travelling in the Andhra Pradesh Express from Hyderabad to Delhi in October '84, I was looking for birds on the telephone wires along the rail track. Mostly I found the Common Myanah, Black Drongo, Spotted Doves Small Green Bee-eaters, Mynas, Indian Robin, Indian Roller, Swifts and Swallows and an occasional Warbler.

Around noon, the train crossed the Godavari river bridge near Mancherial in Adilabad district. On the telephone wires, along the track, hanging were hundreds of Baya nests, already abandoned. For a stretch of four to five kilometer at an interval of 0.5 to 5 meters the dry nests were hanging in all stages of construction. Scanning the surrounding open denuded area, I found no tree growth above 2-3m in height and most of them were wild datepalms in the scattered Jowar fields. The small ditches (result of railway track work) below the telephone wires had little water and possibly acted as a catalyst for nest building by the Bayas. The Handbook (Ali and Ripley) writes:

"Nests hung along telephone wires or from the palm-leaf thatching tenanted village huts are not uncommon in some parts of the country. A colony usually contains nests in all stages of construction from the initial attachment or 'wad' through the various half finished 'bell' or 'helmet' stages up to complete retorts with long entrance tubes".

Bayas adopted themselves to nest on the telephone wires-- or is it the location of the wires above the small puddle of water!

SOCIETY NEWS:

(From the Secretary's Desk)

In the fourth quarter of the year (October-December) members of the Society participated in six field outings and three indoor meetings arranged.

The trip to Shamirpet (14th October) was rewarded by sighting of 64 species, with first sighting of the season of the Common Pochard and the Kestrel (for the members as a group). The Paradise Flycatcher, not seen much till about 1982 was seen at Shamirpet. Some of the other interesting observations were the Blackheaded Cuckoo-shriks, Large Indian Kite, Green Sandpiper, Openbill Stork, Brahminy Kite, Pied Crested Cuckoo, Little Minivet, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Franklin's Wren-Warbler, Large Egret, Fantail Snipe and the Pied Bush-chat.

The Rowriyal lake (28 October) was teeming with bird life. Members were so busy observing these feathered delights that they forgot about three members who somehow failed to meet others at a scheduled point. By the time they felt their absence the list had gone up to 72 species that included a flock of Black Ibis, Spotbills, Garganey, Common Pochards, Common Cotton and Lesser Whistling Teals. The Harriers (Marsh, Montague's and Pallid) were active along with the Blackwinged Kite. Green Sandpipers and Little Stints were observed along with the Blackwinged stilts. All the three kingfishers (Pied, White-breasted and Common Blue), three shrikes (Grey, Rufous backed and Backbacked) and three Babblers (Common, Large Grey and Whiteheaded) were sighted. The Anti-poaching squad officials of the forest department accompanying the BSAP members apprehended 'gun holder' waiting to lessen the habitat of a few ducks!

Fourth November saw some 28 members of the Society driving off to Narsapur forest. Those who could not make it to Narsapur missed the chance of seeing the Blackbacked Woodpecker. The checklist rose to nine short of a century in this nearest (55 km) forest to Hyderabad, and included Bonelli's Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Goldfronted Chloropsis, Little Pied Flycatcher, Verditer Flycatcher, Whitebrowed Bulbul, Grey Heron, Spotbill, Garganey, Common and Lesser Whisling teal as also Cotton teal and Gadwal. Grey Hornbill, Grey Tit, Marsh and Pallid Harrier, Blackheaded Cuckoo Shrike and little minivet were also seen.

Anantagiri (25 November) always attracts more members. For the thirty of the BSAP members sighting of 58 species was not a bad count in the forested area of this hill. A most interesting but uncommon sighting was the Pygmy woodpecker. Also observed were the White-eyed Buzzard, the White-bellied Drongo, Redbreasted Flycatcher and the lesser Whitethroat. Most of the migrants have made their appearance but some have been eluding so far.

The excellent transport arrangement, early in the morning of 9th December (Courtesy Dr.and Mrs.L.D.Windale and Dr.and Mrs.Peacock, BSAP members from ICRISAT) found 31 of the

members inside the sprawling (3000 Acres) ICRISAT farmland near Patancheruvu on the Hyderabad-Bombay Highway. The well protected ICRISAT campus with its jheels had always been a good birding place, but on 9th December the list rose to 103. For the first time in 5 years BSAP crossed its hundredth mark on a single day. I prefer to mention just five species so as to avoid the editors red pencil. They are: the Reef Heron(Dark phase), Pied Harrier (Male and Female), White-necked Stork, Grey Plover, Yellow Wagtail and a lone Rosy Pastor; eventhough it was a bit too early for it to be there.

The trip to the Zoo (23 December) was uneventful and the attendance of the members was also poor. Perhaps the members were busy for the christmas holidays. The only uncommon birds seen were the Bluetailed Bee-eater, Large Cuckoo Shrike, Common Wood Shrike and the Greyheaded Mynah.

On 22 October the indoor meeting was held with a filmshow and discussing the role of organisations like ours in conservation. Two weeks later the members met (on 5th November) to condole the death of a great leader and conservationist and the beloved Prime Minister of India, Smt.Indira Gandhi. Members stood in silence for one minute to pay homage to the departed soul. Following this a condolence message was read out by our President which was passed as a resolution. This was communicated to Mr.Rajiv Gandhi, her son and the present Prime Minister who gratefully acknowledged the letter and thanked the society for the sentiments expressed.

Mr.D.L.N.Rau, one of our well travelled member and an excellent photographer showed the members some of his beautiful slides (on 5 November) of birds and animals and Mr.Mehdi Ali another member and efficient photographer screened his slides of birds and animals at the indoor meeting on 3rd December.

COMMENTS:

"I have been more diverted or to say attracted to a place called 'Telekunchi' just 4 km off Ichapuram where large number of Open-billed Storks are breeding. I am visiting this place whenever time permits on weekends. I shall be glad to have some advice/guidance as to on what line should I compile my study/report. However, I feel that coastal area covering Srikakulam district has large potential for migratory birds.

Another point I wanted to confirm is the dictionary meaning of "HERONRY" says a place where Herons nest and the ornithological meaning of a "colony" is where many birds nest together. Does this 'many birds' mean same species or different species of birds? In the case of Teleneelapuram where two different species of birds nest together, I observe eminent people using the word "Heronry". Is it correct? In the case of Telekunchi where only one species of many birds nest together could it be called as Colony or Heronry?".

- T.V.P.Sastry, State Bank of India,
Ichapuram. Pin-532312.

Editors: Readers and members are requested to reply to Mr.Sastry with copies marked to the Secretary or Editors of BSAP.

BIRDWATCHERS' SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

The Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh was founded in 1980 with the object of spreading the message of bird conservation. Services to members include fortnightly field-trips, slide and film shows, discussions and talks; MAYURA, the quarterly newsletter, ID cards, field tick-lists and badges. Membership of the Society is open to persons of either sex & of any nationality, scientific societies, institutions, clubs & companies. Corporate Membership is available for persons in their official capacity. For membership and contributing articles to MAYURA, and advertisements, contact the Hon. Secretary, Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, 6-3-249/3, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

—: o :—

Membership Fee :

Ordinary	.....	Rs. 25/- p. a.
Life	.....	Rs. 300/-
Students	... ...	Rs. 15/- p.a.
Corporate	.....	Rs. 100/- p.a.

For Advertisement Tarrif :

Contact Hony. Secretary

OFFICE BEARERS

Pushp Kumar	President
S. Ashok Kumar Maj. A.A. Aziz	} Vice Presidents
Siraj A. Taher	Hon. Secretary
T. Deendayal	Hon. Treasurer

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

a) To inculcate in the people, especially the youth, a spirit of adventure, a love & appreciation of the beauties of nature, especially the avifauna.

b) To impress upon the people the role of avifauna in life on earth & the urgent need for their protection and conservation.

c) To inculcate in the people a sense of responsibility towards maintaining the environment in a good state & the protection of the other inhabitants of this earth & particularly the avifauna.

d) To work for the protection & conservation of bird sanctuaries, parks & habitats generally all over India & particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

e) To promote amongst the people, the knowledge of ornithology in all its branches including particularly the study of bird life of the Oriental Regions, particulary India & the adjoining zeogeographical regions; both alive & otherwise

f) To carry out research in all branches of ornithology and to assist with information & advice as well as financially where possible, other institutions & individuals in similar pursuits.

g) To provide, equip, maintain & replenish a museum & other repositories for birds, both living or dead, which are suitable & necessary for the study of birds.

h) To do all or any of the above mentioned acts solely or with another or others, for joint management or collaboration or affiliation or any other arrangements with societies or persons having similar or allied objects which may further or benefit the objects of this society.

—: o :—

Front Cover :

INDIAN COURSER (*Cursorius coromadnelicus*). A sandy brown cursorial bird lacking the double breast bands of the extremely rare Jerdon's courser. Resident and patchily distributed in appropriate habitats in Andhra Pradesh. Unlike the Jerdon's Courser which was reported only from the Pennar and Godavary valleys of A. P.

Back Cover

INDIAN KOEL (*Eudynamys scolopacea*). Female (shown in the photo) is dark brown and white barred. The Male is glistening metallic black, with yellowish green bill. Resident & local migratory, it is a very common bird in Andhra Pradesh. Brood parasitic on other birds.

Photographs : Courtesy O. C. Edwards.